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Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

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The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):

Order, please!

The hon. the Member for St. John's South.

MR. MURPHY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think all too often we see things happening on behalf of Newfoundland by Newfoundlanders that we do not recognize. I would ask the hon. House today if you, Sir, would be kind enough to forward our congratulations to Mr. Albert Anstey from Salt Pond, Burin, who just competed and was part of the Canadian National Men's Dart Team which won the World Cup Championship. Mr. Anstey is also, of course, the Canadian National Men's Champion. I ask this hon. House to pass on our congratulations to him because after all he is a World Champion.

Before I sit, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that on this weekend Joy Burt from Lark Harbour on the West Coast will be competing in the World Champion Power Lifting in Sydney, Nova Scotia, representing this Province. She is a previous world champion and I know that this House wishes her well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity, for the second time, because there a few weeks ago I put forward the motion that you would send congratulations to

Mr. Anstey on his performance in darts. That was shared, Mr. Speaker, by Members on the other side of the House, although the comment across the floor by the Premier was that he thought it was a little bit silly to get involved in that sort of thing, but we did, Mr. Speaker, with the support of the House, send congratulations to Albert Anstey.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They had to wait until he was away.

MR. TOBIN:

That is right. I am extremely proud of the accomplishments of Mr. Anstey. He is a very close friend of mine. I can tell hon. Members that when Mr. Anstey arrived in Toronto to participate in the Dart Tournament; when he got to his room there were telegrams there from myself and from other Members encouraging him. There were phone calls there, Mr. Speaker, from all of us. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the people of the Burin Peninsula were very supportive of Mr. Anstey in terms of participation. Again, Mr. Speaker, I, and this side of the House join with all hon. Members, for the second time, in offering our congratulations to Mr. Anstey on his success in darts.

At the same time I want to share the comments of my colleague as it relates to the participation of Miss Burt, who is another very capable Newfoundlander who has distinguished herself, and who this House before, I believe, with the motion put forth by my colleague for Humber East (Ms Verge) - how could I forget Humber East, Mr. Speaker, after election night - the comments put forth by my colleague, Mr. Speaker, from Humber East (Ms Verge) that we do

join on this side of the House with the hon. Member's comments in extending our gratitude to both of them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The Chair will gladly acquiesce to and accommodate the wishes of hon. Members with respect to these two matters. But it is probably an appropriate time to say that in our Orders of the Day and in our routine matters of the day we have no provision for this kind of thing, although it is by tradition and by precedent that we allow these congratulatory messages and this kind of thing to happen. But I just want to say that maybe when we set up a Committee of Reform, that certainly we should make this practice legal and included in whatever parliamentary reform the House happens to adopt.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

I share your views totally, as always. I believe, I recall the Government making some indication publicly that it intended to establish a committee of the House, both sides, to work on some appropriate rule changes. And I believe that was one of the items, in fact, they talked about six months ago or something when they brought in the Throne Speech. So perhaps with Your Honour's refreshing their memories here today, the Government might soon act on that matter.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Opposition House Leader realizes we have had conversations about this very topic, and we recognize that there should be more occasions when private Members of the House should be able to express opinions, or bring congratulatory messages, or whatever they do. It could be along the lines that are now in existence in the House of Commons in Ottawa whereby perhaps there would be some time provided early in the day to allow a minute and a half or two minutes or whatever for such statements to be made. I would like to thank Your Honour for reminding us of this situation and I am sure it will be dealt with in the near future.

Oral Questions

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

MR. WOODFORD:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Forestry and Agriculture.

In view of the fact that forestry is one of the most important industries in the Province, and also because the wood supply for the newsprint industry in the Province has been devastated over the last number of years by the budworm and looper and some programs that have been instituted

and not kept up, a silviculture program is vitally important to the viability and could mean the success or the demise of the newsprint industry in this Province. Would the Minister tell the House what the status of negotiations is now with the Federal Government pertaining to a new silviculture program?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. Member for his question. He is right. Forestry is very important to the economy of this Province and silviculture is obviously very important to forestry.

I can tell the hon. Member that the existing agreement expires on March 31, 1990, and that my Department and the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs are presently negotiating a new agreement. I have met with the federal Minister of Forestry myself. We have every indication that we will have an agreement in place before the old one expires, so everything is on track. I might say to the hon. Member that the Federal Government recognizes the importance of the Forestry Agreement for Newfoundland. The Agreement is being negotiated, and at this point in time I have no reason to be concerned about the outcome.

MR. WOODFORD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber Valley on a supplementary.

MR. WOODFORD:

It is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister can correct me if I am wrong, that the silviculture program is an agreement between the companies and the Province. But, at the same time, when negotiating a total forestry agreement for the Province, because of the fact it would be detrimental to the way the companies compete in the marketplace on whether an agreement is signed, and because the old Agreement was such a good one, will the Minister, in the course of his negotiations, ensure that a silviculture program is included in the new agreement with the Feds, as well as in the one between the Province and the companies, which can come after and in conjunction with that? And will he ensure that the same terms and conditions that were in the old Agreement stay there, because they worked well, as well as some new parts of the Agreement that the companies want in, namely - and I would like to mention this one in particular - the cost-sharing for access roads in the Province? So those three are: a silviculture program with the feds in the agreement, the terms and conditions be kept as they were in the old agreement, and, thirdly, but most importantly, that the companies be listened to with regard to the cost-sharing program for access roads.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, the Member will know that the Province's Silviculture Agreement is by and large funded. The Province funds its share of the Silviculture Agreement from funds received from the Federal Government under the Federal/Provincial agreement.

MR. SIMMS:

They do not have to.

MR. FLIGHT:

But they do. And the agreements the Provinces then sign or work out with the Paper companies for silviculture are separate agreements. So my answer to the Member is yes, we will be looking to get the funds we require to carry out the silviculture program we envision, and we will then negotiate with the companies for their share of the silviculture program.

Now with regard to guaranteeing the Member that the terms and conditions of the agreement now being negotiated are as good as those in the one that is about to expire, I can tell the Member that we are hoping to improve on them. So it will be as good, and quite possibly there will be improvements.

The third question, if the Member would.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Access roads.

MR. FLIGHT:

Access roads. Again, as the Member knows, by and large the Province uses its own source of funding to build and maintain access roads; they also use funds that are negotiated under agreement, and we will have a very viable road construction and maintenance program in Forestry in the coming years.

MR. SIMMS:

You will?

MR. FLIGHT:

Why will we not?

MR. SIMMS:

We are asking you.

MR. FLIGHT:

Oh, I see. Yes, we will. Does the Member have a reason to think we will not? The very sincere Member for Humber Valley can be well assured, Mr. Speaker, that his concerns will be addressed in the agreements and by the Administration of the Department of Forestry.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Humber Valley.

MR. WOODFORD:

I have been hearing over the last couple of weeks, especially since the House opened, that the Fishery is the fault of the Feds, the jobless rate in the Province is probably the fault of the Feds, the UI regulations and every other thing are the fault of the Feds. I hope this will not be another example of the fault of the Feds. The newsprint industry in the Province is really serious.

I can say that the Minister is sincere in his answers so far, and I hope he keeps that up and does not lay blame on the Feds again, because forestry is one of the growing and most important industries in this Province and it would be detrimental to our people if he did not keep the viability of it in mind in his negotiations; we have only an eight to ten year supply in the Province. And when you are talking about the spray program or the silviculture program, make sure the people involved in the industry are consulted.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, I just finished saying to the hon. Member that we have, at this point in time, a very successful forest industry in Newfoundland. Now, what is there to blame on the Feds? I have nothing to blame on the Feds at this point in time, as I just told the Member.

The last agreement we signed was a \$48 million Provincial/Federal agreement over four years. The Federal Government put \$48 million into the agreement, which gave us \$12 million per year to spend in silviculture and all the other programs. I have no reason to believe at this point in time that that \$48 million will not be increased; we are looking for an increase.

Now I have to ask the Member in all sincerity, because he was -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

You cannot ask the Member.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The hon. Member asks you.

MR. FLIGHT:

I will 'suggest' to the Member in all sincerity.

He is suggesting that I am not to blame this or that on the Federal Government. Well, let me ask this: Suppose we ask the Federal Government for \$48 million and they reduce it to \$25 million, who am I supposed to blame it on, France?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MURPHY:

Blame it on Meech Lake.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House

Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question, as well, for the Minister of Forestry and it relates to a question I attempted to ask him a few days ago concerning the proposed changes at the Wooddale Nursery, which will provide for a number of job losses, as he is aware, and I hope he does not provide a similar answer; it seems he always provides the same answer. A moment ago he said and I quote, "with respect to the Federal/Provincial agreement, at this moment I have no reason to be concerned." Those were his exact words. Well, Mr. Speaker, since the Minister said to me in this House last June, just a few short months ago, when I raised the matter of the cutbacks at Wooddale, the very same thing, "There is no reason to be concerned at this point in time," can the Minister tell me if he meant not now, but watch out a few months from now? Can he tell if there is any reason to be concerned about job cutbacks, since changes to be made there have been known for quite some time? And, specifically, did he tell employees at a meeting held this summer that at least sixty jobs will be lost at that facility, and that only seventy to eighty employees will be rehired next spring?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, I will tell the hon. the Member from Grand Falls this, that if I did tell them I told the employees. I had the courage to go to Wooddale and tell them.

MR. TOBIN:
Did you now?

MR. SIMMS:
Did you?

MR. FLIGHT:
Yes, I did indeed.

MR. SIMMS:
Did you?

MR. FLIGHT:
But I was not specific, Mr. Speaker, in sixty jobs. I do not know where the Member gets his figures.

I went to Wooddale, I met with the employees, every last one, and I made sure there were enough work weeks. Their big concern at that point in time was that they would be laid off before they had acquired enough benefits. I had my staff look at the operation and we made sure, for the first time ever, that every employee with Wooddale got enough weeks to qualify for UI. I simply said to them that from this point on, we have to run Wooddale in a cost-effective way. If we need ten million seedlings to carry out our silviculture program in 1990, then we only need enough employees to produce ten million seedlings. We may need more employees than are there now to produce those ten million seedlings. My responsibility, Mr. Speaker, is to strike a balance between the needs of the Department of Forestry as it applies to Wooddale, and making sure that Wooddale provides as much employment as it is possible to provide.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Opposition House

Leader.

MR. SIMMS:
I wish the Minister would learn to stop being flimsy-flamsy, and whamby-bamby, and namby-pamby about questions he is asked. Did he tell employees at the meeting that there would only be seventy or eighty re-hired next year? That was the question I asked and, of course, he avoided answering and professed everything he knows about forestry, which is everything in the world.

Since that is the case, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask him a simple question: Exactly what mechanical changes are being planned at that facility, and has he obtained approval and clearance to eliminate those jobs from the senior Minister in this Government, the Acting Premier, the man who runs this Government, the hon. Doug House?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:
Mr. Speaker, the hon. the Member for Grand Falls was the Minister of Forestry for three years. I have tried to pattern myself after him, in some instances. I have tried, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. FLIGHT:
But one way I have not patterned myself after him is in getting permission for everything I want to talk about or do in the Department of Forestry.

I can tell the Member, Mr.

Speaker, that some of my senior staff and the management of Wooddale are now looking at and putting in place plans for Wooddale for next year. And when it becomes necessary for me, as Minister, to be aware of what is happening, or to approve it -

MR. SIMMS:

You are not aware?

MR. FLIGHT:

Oh, I am aware, but I am not yet ready to make an announcement on what the situation is at Wooddale. When I am, I will make public what the situation is, or what we might expect for next year. And, Mr. Speaker, among the first people to whom I will make that announcement, by the way, will be the people who are making their living at Wooddale.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

I have a concern about the anxieties being expressed by the employees at Wooddale Nursery. The Minister can put it off as long as he wishes, but I am going to help put them out of their anxieties, because I am going to ask the Minister this: Can he confirm that the following changes are being proposed at the Wooddale tree nursery? - a new precision seeder will be provided; all the rolling benches are going to be replaced at that facility over the next three years; a new mechanical transplant filter is being considered; and presently a work

study is underway, all of which would reduce manual thinning, unloading and transplanting and, therefore, mean a significant number of jobs. If this is true, where is the social obligation the Minister talked about last June? And if that is not enough information, I am prepared to table here today the list of changes the Department plans at that facility, the ten changes, so that the employees will know what is planned if the Minister will not tell.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Member, and the people working in Forestry and at Wooddale will know, that having assumed the office of Minister of Forestry, I interceded and stopped some things happening in Forestry in Newfoundland, including at Wooddale, that were the policy of the previous administration, and that I inherited. There are jobs still in place that would not have been in place had that hon. crowd stayed in.

MR. SIMMS:

These are yours. These are yours.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, as with most Government agencies, the whole operation at Wooddale is being looked at right now in such a way that it will operate properly and not the way some things were operated prior to our assuming office. There will be some changes at Wooddale, Mr. Speaker. And, let me tell the Member this: Up until last August - I am not sure when it was I went to Wooddale and met with the employees - I was getting an

average of two or three calls a day, I was getting letters from employees of Wooddale. I went to Wooddale and met the employees, every last one of them, collectively and individually.

MR. SIMMS:

You did not meet with them all individually. That is not you.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, I addressed their concerns to their satisfaction and I have not had - by the way, when I am ready to make a public statement on the questions I will do that. Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the fact that the Member is spending his days addressing concerns at Wooddale, I have not had one enquiry or one concern raised to me personally on behalf of the employees of Wooddale. And, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I do not have as many constituents working there as he does - of course, he had four years to fill it up - but I have constituents there.

MR. MATTHEWS:

That is why you fired them.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, I have not had a complaint at this point in time from Wooddale.

AN HON. MEMBER:

A political purge.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

I believe the Minister has answered the question.

Again I want to remind hon. Members when they are answering

questions to please answer the questions. And if hon. Members to my right would refrain from interrupting, that would eliminate the temptation to the Minister to allude to that particular question. But Ministers should remember the question and please try to answer the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FLIGHT:

Do I have...?

MR. SIMMS:

No, you are finished. Sit.

MR. FLIGHT:

Oh, my answer is finished. They do not want to hear the facts, Mr. Speaker.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question also for the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, the Constitution of Canada gives total exclusive jurisdiction over forests to the provinces. The forests are a renewable resource on which the three paper mills in our Province and the livelihood of thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are dependent. Mr. Speaker, as scary as this may be, the future of our forests are now ultimately in the hands and control of this Minister and this Government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MS VERGE:

Now I have an important question for the Minister: Can he assure the Members of the House and through us the public that the three paper mills in our Province, the Abitibi-Price mills in Grand Falls and Stephenville and the Kruger mill in Corner Brook, will have an adequate wood supply for the foreseeable future, for our lifetime and beyond?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have to tell the hon. the Member for Humber East (Ms Verge) that it is with some difficulty I can assure her of that, because I have now been charged, with less than six months in office, to make up for the mismanagement of forestry that was permitted by the party opposite when they were in Government, supported totally and wholly and solely by that Member.

Now let me tell the hon. the Member for Humber East that one of the worst plagues to the Newfoundland forests, and one of the reasons the wood supply is in jeopardy is because in 1979, 1980 and 1981 we had massive budworm infestations in this Province, and in 1979 we sprayed for budworm in excess of 200,000 hectares. The next year, because there was going to be a Provincial election, there was no spray program in this Province. How does the Member square that, if she is so concerned about the wood supply?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, let me tell the hon. Member, yes, I do not have any concerns that we have and we will continue to have a wood supply that will sustain the operations of the three mills. But there is going to have to be a lot of co-operation. The forest has been devastated by the budworm, as she knows, but have no worries about the ability of the forests in Newfoundland producing the kind of wood supply that the paper companies will need to maintain their operations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, that is not much assurance.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I understand this Minister has been in office for - what is it? - over six months, yet he has not even visited the paper mill in Corner Brook. I have not heard of him meeting with the Kruger Executives in Montreal, Corner Brook or St. John's. Mr. Speaker, how can the Minister give us any such assurance? And what is this Minister going to do to guarantee the wood supply needed to continue operating the mill in Corner Brook, apart from trying to negotiate with the Federal Government? What if that Federal/Provincial Agreement is delayed? What does the Minister plan to do as the Minister responsible, as the Minister with the exclusive jurisdiction?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FLIGHT:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:
Mr. Speaker, the trouble with the hon. Member is that she expects this Administration to act exactly like that Administration. I have toured the linerboard mill, I have met with Kruger's top people, I have met with Abitibi's top people. That hon. Member would have expected me to have used the excuse to flip off to Toronto on the pretext that I needed to talk about forestry in Toronto. I do not need to go to Toronto to know what is happening to the wood supply in Newfoundland. I know the Member and her colleagues would have taken the advantage to live in Toronto the past four months, if they were as aware of the wood supply situation as I am.

No, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member. At this point in time, I have had meetings in Toronto with the people of Abitibi-Price, when I had reason to have them. I have met every executive with the paper companies in Newfoundland and I am satisfied that I would not improve the situation by going off to Toronto and wasting the money of the people of Newfoundland on such a trip.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:
Mr. Speaker, I referred to the Kruger -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

I have not recognized the hon. Member for the benefit of Hansard

and the people in the galleries.

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am sorry for raising my voice before I was recognized.

MR. SIMMS:
That is okay.

MS VERGE:
But, Mr. Speaker, I referred, in my preamble to the last question, to the Kruger Paper Mill in Corner Brook.

MR. SIMMS:
He has not been there.

MS VERGE:
The Minister does not seem to know that there is no linerboard mill anymore. There used to be a linerboard mill in Stephenville, which is now an Abitibi-Price Pulp and Paper Mill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:
Basic information for the Minister responsible.

MR. SIMMS:
Wake up! Wake up!

MS VERGE:
I want to know if the Minister has visited the Kruger Mill in Corner Brook? Has the Minister met with the Kruger top management and executives who, by the way, are based in Montreal and not in Toronto? More importantly, where does the Minister see Kruger getting its wood supply for operating the Corner Brook Mill for the next twenty years? Where

is the wood going to come from?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. the Member for Humber East would do well to lean over and get some advice from her seatmate - if not her soul mate, certainly her seatmate - because the one paper company in Newfoundland that does not have a wood supply problem is Kruger.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Oh! Is that so?

MR. FLIGHT:

They do not have a wood supply problem. If there is a wood supply problem, the concern would be with the Abitibi-Price Mill in Grand Falls, and their mill in Stephenville, as a result of Abitibi-Price assuming ownership of the mill in Stephenville and then having to supply wood to both mills. At this point, the mill in Corner Brook does not have a wood supply problem, nor do my officials foresee a wood supply problem.

Now, let me tell her about my visiting Kruger. I visited Kruger long before I became the Minister of Forestry. I have toured the Corner Brook mill. I have met with the management of the Corner Brook mill.

MR. SIMMS:

When?

MR. FLIGHT:

Sometime this summer.

MS VERGE:

You have not been to Corner Brook.

MR. FLIGHT:

Oh, yes. In corner Brook.

MR. SIMMS:

You had an excellent meal?

MR. FLIGHT:

Yes, I had an excellent luncheon.

MR. SIMMS:

Since you have been Minister?

MR. FLIGHT:

Yes, since I have been Minister.

MR. SIMMS:

You went through the mill?

MR. FLIGHT:

No, I did not go through the mill.

Mr. Speaker, let me finish. I am being sidetracked by the hon. the Member for Grand Falls. He thinks he is still Forestry spokesman. Does the hon. the Member for Grand Falls not know that he is no longer Forestry spokesman? The hon. the Member for Humber Valley is Forestry spokesman.

I want to put the hon. Member's mind at ease. I have met with the local management. I have not met in Montreal with the owners at this point in time. I have been in touch with them. They have contacted me. I have spoken to them and agreed that one day we will sit down and have a meeting. I have met with the people who know what is happening, the mill management people in Corner Brook, and my Forestry officials are satisfied that the Kruger wood supply is not jeopardized. There is no question about Kruger. Does that make the Member happy? She knows now that her mill will go on, and on, and on.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Green Bay.

MR. HEWLETT:

Mr. Speaker, this Province's

Premier Dancer is doing a constitutional ballet on the national stage. Ironically, the subject of this conference has to do with the economy. On Sunday in this city, fishermen and plant workers are going to march to protest the problems in the Fishery. Forestry, as we know, has problems. Hibernia oil is still in the ground, and Labrador hydro power is still rolling to the sea.

Since we have the national spotlight, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Government House Leader, instead of doing a constitutional ballet why is the Premier not doing a fish dance? Why is he not doing a forestry dance? Why he is not doing a Hydro dance? Why is he not dancing to the Hibernia waltz?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now we know what the Member for Green Bay has been doing for the last week.

The matter he raises, obviously, Mr. Speaker, is a very important one. The Premier is at the First Ministers' Conference. He, as everybody knows, is in the middle of discussions concerning Meech Lake. Also, as everybody knows, there are a variety of other meetings and discussions that will be held while he is at that conference concerning some of the

matters that the Member raised.

I would like to say to the Member, that in light of the many announcements that have been made in this House, in light of the many meetings that the Premier has participated in along with the Minister responsible for Energy, concerning Hibernia, in light of the number of meetings and contacts and efforts this Government has made to get the talks on the Churchill Falls power back on track again, where it has not been for quite some time, in light of all of this tremendous activity that this Government has been undertaking and going through for the last few months, I find it very, very difficult to understand the purpose of the Member's question. The only conclusion I can reach, Mr. Speaker, is that all of a sudden he sees an editorial or something and decides to jump on the bandwagon. That is all I have to say about that.

MR. HEWLETT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Green Bay on a supplementary.

MR. HEWLETT:

My supplementary is to the Minister of Energy.

The Minister knows that the Federal Government and the Governments of Ontario and Quebec are crucial to our Labrador Hydro negotiations, yet these are the very governments that the Premier of our Province has gone about aggravating on Meech Lake. Will the Minister not admit that the Premier's stand will damage our negotiations?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

DR. GIBBONS:

Mr. Speaker, anything that happens on the Churchill River is going to be purely a business proposition, a commercial enterprise, not a constitutional talk.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HEWLETT:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the Member for Green Bay.

MR. HEWLETT:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister will agree that the willing participation of the Federal Government is also crucial in our offshore negotiations. Does the Minister not agree that his Premier, our Premier, should put our oil over his ego?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

DR. GIBBONS:

Mr. Speaker, the House and the people of Newfoundland are well aware of the progress that we have been making most recently on our negotiations for the offshore. These are progressing well, they are still progressing well, and they are not being interferred with by the constitutional discussions.

MR. SPEAKER:

Question Period has expired.

MR. TOBIN:

What?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

It was not thirty minutes, I can tell you that.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oh, I am sorry.

MR. SIMMS:

There are another two minutes remaining.

MR. SPEAKER:

I am sorry. The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West. It was the wrong calculation.

MR. TOBIN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the Minister of Mines and Energy, as well. Basically it has to do with the decision to delay the construction of the Cow Head facility. In my preamble I want to say that we have witnessed here today the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture firing people in Grand Falls, and we know from the past few days that the Minister of Fisheries is doing absolutely nothing for the fishermen and the fish plant workers in this Province.

The Marystown Shipyard, Mr. Speaker, is now at the lowest -

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) the question.

MR. TOBIN:

I am allowed a preamble in an original question, in case the

hon. Member does not know it. I know there is a lot he does not know, but I am allowed a preamble.

Mr. Speaker, the Marystown Shipyard is now at the lowest ebb it has ever been in its history, and a lot of the employees are now leaving and moving to Ontario. In April, Mr. Speaker, the Federal Minister wrote a letter asking for a marketing study into the Cow Head facility. Let me ask the Minister of Mines and Energy if they have received the terms of reference for that marketing study, and whether or not they support the marketing study? Also, let me ask the Minister if they have not agreed or suggested that there should be an indefinite deferral of the expansion to the Cow Head facility?

DR. GIBBONS:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

DR. GIBBONS:
Mr. Speaker, relative to the Cow Head facility and the Federal request, because of that Federal request for the marketing study we never did receive their approval to proceed with the Cow Head expansion. They wanted that marketing study done first, before they gave their approval to proceed.

This Government and the Federal Government have been assessing the Cow Head facility, along with other facilities, in view of the present package we have before us for the development of the offshore because of the new design for Hibernia.

MR. TOBIN:

Do you support the deferral?

DR. GIBBONS:
It is not a matter of deferral, Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of doing an assessment of the new design, what work will come out of that new design, where it will be done, and what we will need to do in the various places in Newfoundland, including Cow Head. The exact details will come out of our present assessment.

MR. SPEAKER:
Question Period has expired.

Before moving on to the next item on the Order of the Day, on behalf of hon. Members I would like to welcome to the public galleries today students of St. Michael's School, Bell Island, accompanied by their two teachers, Mr. Cahill and Mr. Craig. We should point out that Mr. Craig is the State Deputy for the Knights of Columbus in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to table the Annual Report of the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Service Commission for 1987-88.

Orders of the Day

MR. BAKER:
Motion 2, Mr. Speaker.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs to introduce a Bill, "An Act Respecting The Department Of Municipal And Provincial Affairs," carried. (Bill No. 29).

On motion, Bill No. (29) read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

MR. BAKER:
Order 13.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The St. John's Municipal Elections Act." (Bill No. 22).

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:
Mr. Speaker, the intent of this amendment is to enable The City of St. John's Act to have the power to defer the Municipal elections, which were normally scheduled for November 14th, for up to one year, and also that the voters list, compiled by the City Clerk on October 1st, be available to be used in the subsequent election within the one year deferment time frame.

The City of St. John's Act is a separate Act from The Municipalities Act, as is The City of Corner Brook Act and The City of Mount Pearl Act. Each of those three cities has separate Acts, which differ to some extent and give some different powers in comparison to the Municipalities Act. The City of St. John's Act did not have a provision, as The Municipalities Act does have, to allow deferment of elections by

the Minister for up to one year, so the intent of this Bill is to put in an amendment to allow that deferment for up to one year beyond the normal scheduled date of November 14th.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:
Mr. Speaker, I have some difficulty with this Bill. I was of the understanding that when this Bill came before the Legislative Committee that was studying the bills that were coming before the House, I was to be notified by my colleagues. I would assume that this Bill never came before the Committee. Are we looking at something, in that this Bill never went before the Legislative Committee? Mr. Speaker, if that be the case, the Minister is barking up the wrong tree here.

On several occasions we have heard the Premier and we have heard the President of Treasury Board talk in this House about this new approach, that all proposed legislative changes were to be brought before Committees of the House to be studied and now, Mr. Speaker, we have this very important one, on Thursday -

AN HON. MEMBER:
Calm down now.

MR. TOBIN:
I will calm down, yes. I am calmed down. I will tell you something right now, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to be hoodwinked, we are not going to be bluffed to death by this Government into believing that all legislation coming before the House would be studied by the Review Committee

and now we have a piece of Legislation that the Minister - Mr. Speaker, this is unbelievable - is putting before the House -

MR. HOGAN:
(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:
Mr. Speaker, this may not be serious to the Member for Placentia, because when we talked about amalgamation issues in Placentia, the Mayor, Mr. Collins, had to take the lead, and Mr. Collins will be taking the lead in the Placentia area after the next election, as well.

Now let me get back to the Bill. Today is Thursday, the election is Tuesday, Monday is a holiday, so we have today and tomorrow to debate a Bill as important as this, we have today and tomorrow to decide whether or not there will be an election in the City of St. John's. That is what it amounts to, we have today and tomorrow to decide on whether the service will be provided to the residents of St. John's on Tuesday. What kind of bulldozing is that, Mr. Speaker? What are they trying to drive through this House?

By the way, the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs has given the St. John's Council permission to delay their election without asking the House of Assembly for approval to do so.

MR. MATTHEWS:
That is right. They have no authority.

MR. TOBIN:
They have no authority, Mr. Speaker. Where did the Minister get the authority?

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible) read the Act.

MR. TOBIN:
I guess I can read the Act.

I heard what the Minister said, too, that the authority has to be granted.

By the way, the Member for Placentia might not be aware that if this Bill is not approved, there will be an election in St. John's on Tuesday. That is what is going on, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:
It is not.

MR. TOBIN:
It is, Mr. Speaker. Resign! Go talk to your Member or get out. Do one thing or the other. If you do not support it, leave. I would not support it if I were there either, that type of bulldozing, that type of dogmatic tactics being brought into this House by a Government that bases itself -

AN HON. MEMBER:
What a (inaudible).

Mr. Speaker, what did the editorial say, "Clyde's way or no way?" And we have the same thing here today, his way or no way! We talk about issues facing the cities. The statements by the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs in the past few months on amalgamation that were carried: 'Raise taxes! Gullage urges municipalities to raise taxes!' Is that what this Government stands for?

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:
Do you agree with me on that one?

Is that the message that is going to the people in this Province, Mr. Speaker, who are becoming unemployed day after day because of an arrogant Government, because of a Government saturated with contempt for the working people in this Province? Parents cannot afford to send their children to university because the Government over there hiked up tuition fees with the largest increase in this Province's history. You have people like former Presidents of the NTA in Government who supported giving the shaft to the students of this Province. Is that what we have here, Mr. Speaker? Raise taxes! Is this hidden in this bill, Mr. Speaker? This contempt for Parliament has never been matched before; a debate is called to decide whether or not there is going to be an election in this city two days before the election is to be called. The Minister now tries to ram through a piece of legislation, and not only that, has given permission to the City of St. John's to defer their election without authority.

MR. GULLAGE:
(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:
What authority, Mr. Speaker? When he gets up to respond, can the Minister tell me and tell the House what authority? Who gave him the authority to tell the City of St. John's that they could defer their election? Will the Minister make a note of that and when he gets up address the concern?

MR. R. AYLWARD:
Clyde is the be-all and end-all. Clyde told him he could do it.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, the Member says that the Premier said to do it. One day in the paper, Mr. Speaker, the Minister warns municipalities that there will be amalgamation even if he has to force it, and the next day the Premier says there will be no forced amalgamation.

Mr. Speaker, we, as Legislators, have to make a decision as to whether or not we are going to stand by and see the contempt for Parliament we have seen today. I do not know of any time in our history when we have had to make such a crucial decision. The Minister has given permission, number one, to St. John's to defer their election without any authority whatsoever. If this piece of legislation is not approved, it means what for Tuesday? Will there be an election in St. John's if this is not approved?

MR. WOODFORD:
There are no candidates.

MR. TOBIN:
So the Minister, then, would be asking the residents of the City and the Council and everything else in St. John's to break the law. That, Mr. Speaker, is what the Minister is doing. It has to be one thing or the other.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader sits there. Why has this piece of legislation not come before the House instead of debate on the Throne Speech over the past few days? Why the urgency to debate a Throne Speech that was brought in in June? Why the urgency, Mr. Speaker? We had a few pieces of legislation brought before this House to change the name of Departments from the Department of Environment to the Department of Environment and

Lands, or the Department of Career Development to the Department of Development. We had these types of pieces of legislation that meant absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker, and you, Sir, and the Government sat on a piece of legislation as critical as an amendment to The City of St. John's Act, which would decide whether or not there is to be an election in St. John's this Tuesday, or whether or not the Government would be asking the people of St. John's to break the law. Now, that is the long and the short of it.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

A complicated piece of legislation, is it not?

MR. TOBIN:

Yes:

We have been here two weeks, Mr. Speaker, and absolutely nothing of substance has come before the House. There has not been anything nearly as important as this.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would suspect one of the reasons why the Minister would hide this piece of legislation would be because of the lack of capable, competent people on the other side of the House, absolutely no management whatsoever. Another reason, Mr. Speaker, would be to give us the least possible time and keep us as far away from the amalgamation issue as possible. I would suspect, apart from the mismanagement issue, Mr. Speaker, the plan is to keep us away from the amalgamation issue.

Let me say to Members opposite that we will debate the amalgamation issue. We will not run from the amalgamation issue,

Mr. Speaker. We will stand up to it.

I represent a district, Mr. Speaker, that was forced to resettle. I know these people. I know the people who refused, who told the Government where to go when they tried to force amalgamation. I know these communities, Mr. Speaker. I know them well. I know how they suffered because of the amalgamation policies of the Liberal regime in the late 1960s. And the Premier of Newfoundland today was a member of the Cabinet of Newfoundland and Labrador that forced resettlement. And what we are seeing today is the Premier, back to complete his agenda of the 1960s. Do not ever kid yourself, Mr. Speaker, he is back to complete the agenda of the 1960s. He is totally taken up with his beliefs on Meech Lake, if I may say so. With respect to Meech Lake, he wants the provinces to have no power and one central government. He wants to scuttle rural Newfoundland. He wants to set up two or three Utopias and leave the rural communities with no power, no identity, no culture, all lumped into one central area. That is where he is coming from. He is back to complete his agenda, but he will never complete it with the support of the people on this side of the House, nor with the support of Newfoundlanders.

MR. HOGAN:

They did the right thing.

MR. TOBIN:

You tell the people who live in your district, in Petit Forte, who are crying to get back home, and the people of Paradise, that they did the right thing for them in the 1960s. Go back and tell them! Go back and tell them, if

you believe it!

MR. HOGAN:

I am talking about amalgamation.

MR. TOBIN:

Amalgamation and resettlement are the same thing.

MR. HOGAN:

No, it is not.

MR. TOBIN:

No! No! No! Go learn the song, boy, Outport People, and if there is any feeling in you, you would almost cry about it, if you were one of the people resettled. Mr. Speaker, Bud Bavidge should be recognized for his contribution to rural Newfoundland with that lyric.

In this Province today, we are looking at forced resettlement, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WOODFORD:

(Inaudible) was talking about that the other day.

MR. TOBIN:

That is right!

We are looking at a Government without a conscience. We are looking at a Government determined, Mr. Speaker, not to give us the opportunity to debate amalgamation. The Minister can slither his little acts in at the last hour, in the dying days before the people of St. John's will be forced either to have an election or break the law. He can slither them in all he likes, but we will not be intimidated by that type of action from the Minister or from the Government.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, there he goes again. The issue that I am talking about here is that the Minister and the Government lack the courage to let us debate this. What do we have? We have the Throne Speech debate, which was brought in in June. Why was this piece of legislation hidden from the Committee? Let me ask the Member who serves on one of the Committees why this piece of legislation was kept from the Committees?

AN HON. MEMBER:

You were supposed to have that.

MR. TOBIN:

It was. It was kept from the Committees. The Committees had this piece of legislation?

MR. R. AYLWARD:

The Liberal Members had it.

MR. TOBIN:

The House has it now, but that is not the way it is supposed to happen. The Committee of the Legislature is supposed to have it first, they then deal with it and send it back to the Minister who runs the Department for recommendation, and then it comes here. But not this piece of legislation, that is brought up two days before St John's has to break the law or have an election, despite the wishes of the council. The contempt he has shown for the City of St. John's who have asked for a delay, Mr. Speaker, by not bringing this forth. Where does the Minister think he gets that power? There are a lot of other people, I am sure, on our side of the House who want to speak on this resolution. How much time have I got?

AN HON. MEMBER:

You have an hour yet.

MR. TOBIN:

Thirty minutes? Okay, Mr. Speaker. I do not intend to sit down until I have to, by the way. I do not intend to see this type of action -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Why do you not talk about amalgamation?

MR. TOBIN:

Okay, I will talk about amalgamation.

Raise taxes, Gullage urges municipalities. Gullage urges the towns and the councils in the communities to raise taxes, to sock it to the poor and the unemployed, and the unemployed people on the Burin Peninsula, as a result of the poor fishery. A Government that lacks any decency or policies, Mr. Speaker. Unemployed people from the Marystown Shipyard. Unemployed forestry workers in Central Newfoundland fired because he said they came from Grand Falls. Right? That is who he wants to put the burden of taxes on, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMS:

What is the Government's position on whether amalgamation will be forced or it will not be forced?

MR. TOBIN:

Well, I have just dealt with that. The Mount Pearl Mayor disagrees with Gullage. What about that, Mr. Speaker? Here is an interesting one. The Minister said that there would be 117 areas brought into forty three towns. That was one day. The next day, drop amalgamation planned for two Labrador towns. Within days, Mr. Speaker, Wabush and Labrador City had been dropped from amalgamation. Why were the plans

not dropped in Lewin's Cove? He wrote the Minister and told him to resign. He was out to lunch. He should resign rather than force that on the people. What about that, Mr. Speaker? How about this? Despite council's objection Gullage may force Mount Pearl election delay. Is that not the same type of arrogance, the same type of contempt for the municipal people in Mount Pearl, as we see here today, for the people sitting in the House of Assembly when he tried to shuffle in this little Bill so late in the day.

MR. SIMMS:

He had to back down. He was told by the Premier to back down on that one.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, what about this one? Mayor Hodder's remarks on amalgamation provoke angry response from Premier Wells. I would say, tough, Premier Wells. The Mayor of Mount Pearl has been elected to do, and is doing, a tremendous job in Mount Pearl. He is a very credible fellow, a fellow I am proud of, Mr. Speaker. And, I am even more proud of the fact that his roots are from Marystown. So is the Deputy Mayor of Mount Pearl from Marystown by the way. We have a lot in common.

AN HON. MEMBER:

I did not know that.

MR. TOBIN:

How about this, Mr. Speaker, the Minister may force amalgamation. The Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs (Mr. Gullage) is warning municipalities that amalgamation will take place even if it means in some cases forcing it.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Read us another headline.

MR. TOBIN:
What about this one, Mr. Speaker? Amalgamation scheme will save Province \$50 million - raise taxes. Where is it? Here it is, Mr. Speaker; 'Amalgamation scheme will save \$50 million' says Gullage, 'raise taxes' Gullage urges the town. Here is the secret, Mr. Speaker, the culture of the people in Newfoundland. Their home, the land where they were born and bred. The land that they sold, Mr. Speaker, is not important. That has no meaning to this Government. You know, Mr. Speaker, get into the larger centres and drive the buses instead of using your own cars, get jammed up in traffic where you cannot move, no infrastructure put in place, but leave your own soil, Mr. Speaker, because the Minister says we are going to save \$50 million. Now that is the type of a Government we have.

AN HON. MEMBER:
We will be just like Chicago.

MR. TOBIN:
What is that?

AN HON. MEMBER:
We will be just like Chicago.

MR. TOBIN:
Worse than that. You may laugh at that. But if the Premier of this Province has his way, with his belief in one central, strong, domineering centre, he would move us all into St. John's if he could. Yes, Mr. Speaker, he would move us all into St. John's. He would put that burden on all of us to move to St. John's. And do you know something else the Outer Ring Road would not exist. We still would not get the Outer Ring

Road. We still would not have the services.

AN HON. MEMBER:
It would be worse than Chicago.

MR. TOBIN:
It would be worse than Chicago, you are right.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the former Minister -

MR. HOGAN:
(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:
Mr. Speaker, we hear the hon. the Member for Placentia (Mr. Hogan), and I am sure he is going to speak to this Bill that he has been asked to ram through this House. I am sure you are going to stand up and say what you think of it, forced amalgamation, delayed elections, the culture of rural Newfoundland.

MR. SIMMS:
When are Dunville and Placentia and Freshwater and Jersey side amalgamating?

AN HON. MEMBER:
This will have nothing to do with the culture of Newfoundland.

MR. TOBIN:
Yes, a man representing rural Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker, is now the Member for Placentia, for the record, in case I have to send it out, now says, Mr. Speaker, in this House that he is in favour of cutting Placentia Bay adrift. You have it, Mr. Speaker, from Red Island. The people from Red Island, Mr. Speaker, they are all in -

AN HON. MEMBER:
In your district.

MR. TOBIN:

Yes, but most of them are living in Placentia. You talk to these people. I know, my father, Mr. Speaker, is from that great island, Merasheen Island, the lower end of it, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:

My father was born in a little community called Indian Harbour on the lower end of Merasheen Island that got resettled many years ago. The people of Merasheen were resettled since. Talk to these people.

MR. HOGAN:

He lived in Dunville.

MR. TOBIN:

What is that?

MR. HOGAN:

Your father lived in Dunville.

MR. TOBIN:

Yes, my father lived in Dunville. Oh, yes, my father lived in Dunville and then he moved to Trepassey where I was born, and I went back to that far greater bay to continue the culture, Mr. Speaker. One thing myself and the Member for Humber-St. Barbe have in place is that both of our grandfathers came from Placentia Bay, by the way, mine from Merasheen and Brian's grandfather came from Oderin.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

I am not talking about relatives, forget that. I do not want to know anything about that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, -

AN HON. MEMBER:

My mother came from Oderin.

MR. TOBIN:

That is right, so she did come from Oderin.

And the Member for Placentia, Mr. Speaker, now supports amalgamation. He now supports forced amalgamation, Mr. Speaker. I would say that that is wrong, Mr. Speaker. What is taking place here is a sham.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Why?

MR. TOBIN:

Why? I tell you why it is a sham. Mr. Speaker, the Member for Placentia is not going to get me to sit down that quick. The Member for Placentia is going to listen to it because I dearly love Placentia Bay and I will not stand by and see him or anyone else make fun of it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, why is it a sham? There are towns in this Province and communities who have said 100 per cent of the residents have signed petitions, Mr. Speaker. The petitions are saying we do not want amalgamation. The Member from Green Bay can show you - three islands.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

No, I am going to get back to that by the way. That says sign the forms, and the Minister says 'no, you have got to have this hearing to decide on whether or not you want amalgamation.' Now you got the Minister saying that there is going to be forced amalgamation.

So, who are the independent

people, Mr. Speaker, that he sends out to do these hearings, to bring back the recommendations? Who are they? They are the Deputy Minister - that is no conflict Mr. Speaker, that is no conflict - and the Assistant Deputy Minister. He would not know what the Minister wants to hear either, would he. He would have no idea what the Minister wants to hear, would he. Let the Minister go get independent people sent out, not someone whose cheque is depending on what the Minister says or thinks.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my worst fears, the other day, were heard in this House when we said that there are three islands. Now, can you imagine trying to amalgamate three islands? Can you imagine Oderin, Merasheen, and Red Island for example. But we have three down in Green Bay, down in Green Bay, three islands that they want to amalgamate. And it physically is not possible for it to happen. What does the Member from LaPoile say? Move them, move them, he said. That is what he said. That is what the Member said, 'move them'. Now, is that the right - is that giving the people the right to their cultural identity? Is that giving the people the right to their cultural identity, Mr. Speaker? Move them.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:
What?

AN HON. MEMBER:
Your time is up.

MR. TOBIN:
Yes, well my time is not up. I can go until tomorrow evening, then the rest of them are going

Tuesday and Wednesday. Do not worry, do not worry.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:
What is the position of the Member from St. John's South on the delayed election?

MR. MURPHY:
I concur with the Member for St. John's East.

MR. TOBIN:
You do?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:
Okay, that is fair. That is fair. By the way, this build-up we are debating comes as a result of the Minister's interference in the city and the city asking it. What I am saying is, it is a sleazy way to try to bring it into House, Mr. Speaker, that is what I am saying.

What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that we have been here for two days with no legislation worth anything brought before the House. For two weeks with a Throne Speech debate, yes, Mr. Speaker, and today - I do not understand, the Members do not understand the importance of this. But the importance of this legislation, as I have pointed out so often, is to decide on whether or not there is an election in St. John's on Tuesday.

The other thing I have pointed out, and I will say it again for the record, is that the Minister with no responsibility, no authority whatsoever, took the House of Assembly for granted,

took this legislature for granted, went out, Mr. Speaker, and gave permission to delay the St. John's election without the approval of this House. And I do not like it, Mr. Speaker. I do not like to be taken for granted by any Minister or any Member over there, and I do not think that anyone else on this side of the House likes to be taken for granted either.

That is the issue here today. That is the issue here today.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They are forced to ram it through the House.

MR. TOBIN:

That is right. They are forced to ram it through the House.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What committee was that?

MR. TOBIN:

That is the issue here today. The issue here today is the contempt for the Legislature by you and your colleagues opposite. That is the issue here today, and we do not take it very lightly. We are not going to take it lightly, and we are going to, Mr. Speaker, we are going to -

AN HON. MEMBER:

You know the difference of that.

MR. SIMMS:

(Inaudible) until the cows come home.

MR. TOBIN:

What about the election, what time do they have to go? What time will the election be called Tuesday? Will they have to have an advanced poll Monday night or anything?

I guess, Mr. Speaker, the most

important thing is whether or not there will be services. The election is one thing, the contempt for the House is the other thing, but what we also got to look at is whether or not there will be services in this city come Tuesday. Whether or not there will be garbage collection in this city on Tuesday. Whether or not the people in this city will have street lighting on Tuesday. Whether or not there will be a council in this city on Tuesday. If this Bill is defeated, if this Bill is not passed, and there is no election, then there is no council. Then there is no council, Mr. Speaker, then there is no council. I am voting in Marystown, Mr. Speaker, out in the bay. Out where I enjoy being, not like the Member for Placentia (Mr. Hogan) who just moved in here.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He left Dunville.

MR. TOBIN:

Oh, yes, the Member for Placentia moved in.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

I do not know, Mr. Speaker, there has been so many of these U-Haul trucks in his District in the last few weeks with the people of Long Harbour moving to Toronto, he thought he had to move too.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is serious.

MR. TOBIN:

It is extremely serious, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You never know what the Minister of Development has done.

MR. TOBIN:

And I wonder where the Member for St. John's North (Dr. Warren) has been for the last two weeks, Mr. Speaker, when he did not put it to the House to be debated. Where was he? Where was the interest of your constituents then? Where have they been since you got elected? Forgotten, except you have an EA to do your work.

DR. WARREN:

(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

Now, Mr. Speaker, if the Member for St. John's North (Dr. Warren) wants to get on with this. We were debating an issue here extremely serious. He sat in the Cabinet and was part and parcel of the group that denied the debate in this Assembly until the dying hours.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Right on.

MR. TOBIN:

And I hate to say that about the Member, but I think he was bullied into it, Mr. Speaker, by Members opposite.

DR. WARREN:

(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

That is what I am saying, I do not think that you wanted to do it. I think you were bullied into seeing it deferred.

MR. SIMMS:

(Inaudible).

AN HON. MEMBER:

Now, now!

MR. SIMMS:

Listen, (inaudible).

AN HON. MEMBER:

You have an hour, Glenn.

MR. TOBIN:

I have an hour.

Okay then, Mr. Speaker, why should we give approval to this Bill?

AN HON. MEMBER:

A good Bill.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The people of St. John's are depending on it.

MR. TOBIN:

Right. That is exactly right. The Member for St. John's South (Mr. Murphy) said the people of St. John's are depending on this bill, and I agree with him. Now why is it that 3:30 on a Thursday evening with the House closing tomorrow morning, a decision has to be made on a Bill as important as this where every Member in this House is entitled to speak for how many minutes? Half an hour?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Half hour.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You can have an hour if you wish, but you do not have to take it.

MR. TOBIN:

Okay, but every Member in this House is entitled to an hour and I have an hour okay.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

Now how long is that going to take? Do you know, Sir, that as a St. John's Member that your Government, your House Leader and

the Cabinet have denied you the right to participate in this bill?

MR. MURPHY:
(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:
It should have been brought to the Legislature two weeks ago. That is when it should have been brought. Your Cabinet, Sir, have denied you the right to participate in this debate as well as other Members opposite. And that is wrong. And do you know something else, it is the first piece of legislation this year that has not gone to the Committee stage.

AN HON. MEMBER:
That is right.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Shame!

MR. TOBIN:
Do you know that if the rules of the House are applied strictly that time does not permit the passage of this Bill? Do you know that?

AN HON. MEMBER:
We know that.

MR. TOBIN:
You know that do you not? Okay.

Why then did you not insist that it be brought to us? Why was it not gone to Committee stage where at least some of us would have had the opportunity to participate and not do it today?

MR. SIMMS:
Why did you not do it last week?

MR. WINDSOR:
Why did you not do it two weeks ago?

MR. TOBIN:
Why?

MR. WINDSOR:
It would take twenty minutes to write up a one page Bill like that.

MR. TOBIN:
Where is it?

Since St. John's decided to delay their election, the Member for St. John's South (Mr. Murphy) is saying Government could not do that. And do you know something else most of the people in Newfoundland would believe you.

MR. MURPHY:
That is probably true.

MR. TOBIN:
Most of the people in Newfoundland would believe you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. MURPHY:
(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:
Okay and they made a request to the Government and you just said Government did not have time to -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order! Order!

MR. TOBIN:
Now, Mr. Speaker, the Bill would amend The St. John's Municipal Election Act to provide that the Minister may defer the general election of the mayor and councillors in the City Of St. John's for up to twelve months. This Bill would also provide that the voters list compiled by the City Clerk on October 1, could be used in the deferral of the general election. That is what the Member for St. John's South

(Mr. Murphy) said that Government did not have time to do. That is what he said. By the way these words are short but it is a very important Act because we are setting a precedent here as well. For the first time since the City of St. John's Act was written, whenever St. John's was founded, it is the first time that we have had a request for a deferral of an election and a piece of legislation like this. It is very important for precedence sake, for others cities and the whole bit. I am sure the Minister will agree with that. By the way, Mr. Speaker, if you were to calculate the time that we have to make a decision on this Bill, the Minister and the Government have denied the Members in St. John's the opportunity to discuss this Bill. There is not enough time for every member from St. John's to debate this Bill. That is a very important point.

MR. PARSONS:

This has to go to Committee tomorrow.

MR. TOBIN:

That is right, it has to go to Committee tomorrow.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Third reading tomorrow.

MR. TOBIN:

So, break the law. That is how important this piece of legislation is. The citizens of St. John's will know on Tuesday whether they will have to vote or whether they will have to break the law.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

They have to vote and they have no candidates to vote for.

MR. TOBIN:

They may very well have candidates to vote for but I honestly believe, and I say this sincerely, I honestly believe that the Cabinet did not act responsibly in denying the Members of the House of Assembly the right to debate this piece of legislation. The Cabinet did not act properly by denying the Members from St. John's the right to debate this piece of legislation. They showed contempt for the committee stage. The first piece of legislation, one of importance, one that must be passed, they bypassed the committee, straight on to the House, so second reading - when?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Today.

MR. TOBIN:

Third reading tomorrow. But committee stage first. It has to go to committee. Go to committee tonight?

AN HON. MEMBER:

We will get together tonight.

MR. TOBIN:

Well, if it goes to committee tonight, so be it. We will go to committee tonight. But, I can tell you something, by the time everyone on this side of the House speaks daylight will be well brewing tomorrow morning.

AN HON. MEMBER:

They cannot sit tonight anyway. They have to give notice.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the hon. gentlemen opposite, and ladies, will not look sleepy if they are here all night. They will be alive and well.

I have a few more questions for the Minister. Super city looms,

Gullage: Did the Minister ever think that he was going to get unanimous support from the people in the area that he chose to incorporate into this super city? Did the Minister really think that was possible, that he was going to bring all of the Northeast Avalon, the whole bit into one city? Did the Minister think that that was going to happen?

Mr. Speaker, we have some councils, particularly the city council in Mount Pearl, who have shown beyond a shadow of doubt, with figures done by experts, hired consultants, to go out and do a preview or an assessment of what it would cost, of what amalgamation would cost?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Your time is up.

MR. TOBIN:

Yes, in an hour's time, and by leave after that.

The consultants that they hired, people renowned in this field, brought in statistics that showed that the taxes in Mount Pearl would increase up to 87 per cent. This was done by chartered accounts. And what appears the next day in the paper: amalgamation will not create financial woes the Premier says. Now, if we are going to ask people-

AN HON. MEMBER:

The Premier knows things better than the experts.

MR. TOBIN:

The Premier does not know everything better than experts. The Premier thinks he knows everything better than experts.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Did you read the editorial today?

MR. TOBIN:

Yes, I read the editorial in the papers today.

MR. SIMMS:

He is lucky he is in Ottawa today.

MR. TOBIN:

You were talking to Premier House, okay that is different. Now Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Municipal affairs and his Government are sincere, which I do not believe they are, but just assume that they are sincere by trying to create amalgamation for the benefit of these cities, the Minister must know that there is going to be financial burdens on these places. His Department is not prepared as I understand it to bring for example: Burin is supposed to amalgamate with Port au Bras, Fox Cove, Mortier and Lewin's Cove. Now, there is no service whatsoever in Port au Bras, they need water and sewer services, they do not have one thing - a very large centre - and they have not one service whatsoever, no council roads because of 75/25. The roads, Mr. Speaker, I remember when I was elected in 1982, there was in excess of thirty million dollars worth of roads to be done in my District. In six years we had it down to about four million and last year we only had one job, they robbed the rest and kept it back. Now, all of these communities were supposed to be absorbed by Burin. Burin said to the Department of Municipal Affairs, if all of these now become part and parcel of Burin, who provides the snow clearing, who provides the water and sewer services that are not in some of these communities, who provides the maintenance on the road and before that who provides the upkeep of the road. Who gives the

equipment to do all this? Do you know the response? The Town of Burin. Now Mr. Speaker, that is wrong, that is not fair, that is morally, financially, and everything else wrong, to place that type of burden on small municipalities that cannot afford it even though they are going to amalgamate. What the Minister is proposing is for the larger centre to amalgamate with the smaller towns. The smaller towns do not have any tax base whatsoever.

But what about the wishes of people, Mr. Speaker, in some other centres. People who do live in centres that do have a tax base, I was just outlining places that do not, people that do have a tax base.

But they want to maintain their own identity. They want to maintain their own identity, they want to live on the land that their fathers and their grandfathers harvested and carved out for them. They gave them land to build their homes, they wanted to live on the land. Their grandparents and their fathers were cutting logs to make the land clear for them to build houses. What about these individuals, Mr. Speaker, do they not have a right to be left in their own place? Why should Government want to uproot these people, why should Government ask to uproot these people and to deny them the basics.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:
Because of the basic needs Mr. Speaker, because of the basic needs of these municipalities. Mr. Speaker, the Member for Pleasantville can laugh all he like about what I am saying, but

what I am saying may not impinge upon the Member for Bellevue, but I can tell him it is very much alive in my district, there are concerns, people want to keep their identity, they want to live in Lewin's Cove, they want to be called Lewin's Cove, they want to maintain their identities and their services and they want Government which has responsibility. The Government of Newfoundland has a responsibility to provide them with water and sewer services. They should not depend on the larger towns to provide them with those services, the Government has a responsibility to provide every householder in this Province, bar none, have a right to demand from the Government water and sewer and roads. They have a right Mr. Speaker, it is not something that you are going to give them because they were good, it is not something you give them because they were Liberal or Conservative, it is something that you give them because they have a right to have it. I can see the Member for St. John's south become upset because, Mr. Speaker, what we have just witnessed in the recreational capital grants in this House in this Province was shameless. The like has never been seen before and I can see the Members become upset. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, these two gentlemen do not agree with the actions of their Government in socking it to the Conservative Districts in this Province. I can see them becoming upset and I can appreciate them, Mr. Speaker, for showing that type of displeasure with their Government.

I was talking about the cultural identity of people living in rural Newfoundland. I am sure the people of Bell Island would not

want to become part of the City of St. John's and called St. John's. It is not proposed, I know that. But they would want to keep their own identity.

MR. WALSH:

(Inaudible) rural Newfoundland.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, I am talking about rural Newfoundland. I have been there all my life and I never had any desire to go any place else, even though I do spend five days a week in here. Could we rotate around the Province out in rural Newfoundland? Out in your District and mine and Gander. Gander is not bad, Mr. Speaker, a good convention centre, Placentia and Carbonear.

Now, Mr. Speaker, getting back to the culture, let us look at St. Mary's - The Capes for a minute. Are you going to tell me that the people of -

MR. HOGAN:

(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

The worst Member that I have ever seen in this House in my seven years, for interrupting, has to be the Member from Placentia. I have never seen it, Mr. Speaker. It was never here before. They are trying to take the House on their backs. I will tell you one thing though there is one man that cannot be accused of taking the House on his back and that is the Minister of Finance.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I was talking about St. Mary's - The Capes.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You are from there are you not?

MR. TOBIN:

Yes, I am. Born in Trepassey and proud of it. The Minister of Fisheries knows it well. As a matter of fact born over on the point. The Minister of Fisheries knows where it is. The Minister of Fisheries used to represent us one time, a great Conservative Member. He was a better Conservative Member than he is a Liberal Cabinet Minister.

Now, Mr. Speaker, are you going to tell me that the people of Portugal Cove South, or the people of Biscay Bay will want to be Trepassey? Are you going to tell me, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Branch want to be St. Bride's? Are you going to tell me that the people of Patrick's Cove want to be Branch? They want to keep their own identity. They want to be St. Bride's wholly and solely forever St. Bride's and not part of St. Bride's and Branch. That is what they want.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in my District do you tell me the people of Baine Harbour want to be part of Boat Harbour. Are you going to tell me, Mr. Speaker, that this type of action by the Government and by the Minister is going to do anything to influence the decision, the discussion here? Mr. Speaker, this is important. This is really important. I am one Member of the House of Assembly who respects the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Do you?

MR. TOBIN:

Yes, I do. I would like to say that. Some of the Ministers I do not respect but the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs I do. But I want to say to him sincerely, that I am extremely

disappointed that he showed so much contempt for this Legislature by not giving us the opportunity to debate this longer.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) Minister of Forestry, he is rookie too.

MR. TOBIN:

That is terrible, Mr. Speaker, because I have a lot of respect for him, why was it not the Minister of Forestry?

There has been a tremendous amount of contempt expressed here for this Legislature. The Government House Leader must acknowledge that. The Government House Leader must acknowledge the contempt that has been shown for his Honor, for the Minister, and for the Members.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What nonsense is he going on with?

MR. HOGAN:

Give it up, Glenn.

MR. TOBIN:

No, Mr. Speaker, I need the Member from Placentia to tell me about amalgamation, plus the Members for St. John's South, St. John's North, St. John's West, whom I will have a lot to say to tomorrow, by the way, unless you clarify it first - St. John's West, Pleasantville, Waterford - Kenmount, St. John's East, Mount Scio - Bell Island, all of these people who, I am sure, Mr. Speaker, want to speak in the debate.

Mr. Speaker, if the people representing the St. John's Districts refuse to speak in this debate, then they are shirking their responsibilities as legislators representing this city. If they do not want and

demand the right to speak in this debate, they are shirking their responsibilities and should consider their resignations.

But, Mr. Speaker, do you know what has happened? The Government House Leader has denied them the right to participate in this great democratic process. They have been denied the right, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, there is something happening here that I have great difficulty with and that, simply put, is the contempt demonstrated for this Legislature. We have to be responsible, we have to act responsible. I intend to be one who does, I intend to be one who is responsible. I intend to be one who stands up for the rights and privileges of every Member who sits in this Legislature. That is the type of responsibility I am going to show over the next few days, responsibility for the rights and privileges of people who have been elected to serve this great Province called Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have basically been denied that right by the Government of the day. We have been denied the right to debate this Bill. Members representing the city of St. John's have been denied the right to participate in a discussion that will decide the future of our city. The delay of the election in St. John's will decide the future of their city, and they have been denied that right, a fundamental right that goes with the jurisdiction of elected representatives. Why? Why the contempt, Mr. Speaker, for this Legislature?

AN HON. MEMBER:

It is called (inaudible).

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I will tell the Member that I was born a Canadian, not a Newfoundlander. I am a lot younger than a lot of these people, and born a Canadian, Mr. Speaker, born a Canadian.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Act your age, then.

MR. TOBIN:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is a good point. Act your age! I will never make a show of myself on the Canadian stage of politics.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You are not doing a bad job now.

MR. TOBIN:

I will always stand up for what I believe in, but I will never, as long as I live, embarrass Newfoundland and Labrador. Nor will I ever be part of a Government by Commission.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What does it say?

MR. TOBIN:

What does it say? I will tell you what it says: 'Dr. House and his Commission have been elected by nobody to run the economy of Newfoundland. Mr. Wells and his Government have been elected. It is a denial of the democratic principles to pass over so much power to a group of unelected persons and to attempt to remove them from the continuous influence of the scrutiny of Her Majesty's Government.' Mr. Speaker, if you want to know what I will never be part of, that is what I will never be part of, nor will anyone on this side of the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:

We will not be part of that type of dictatorship. We will not give over the problems in the fishery. Never, when we get back in Government after the next election, will our Minister of Fisheries relinquish his responsibilities to Dr. House and the Royal Commission. Never will the Minister of Forestry give the rights of administering the forestry in this Province to Dr. House and his Commission. Never will what was said in this editorial take place. We can read that all we like, and the Minister of Fisheries would do well to read it, too, because this House has never before witnessed the contempt you have shown for the fishermen in this Province in the last week. For five years we participated in a response program. Where is it this year? My colleague for Grand Bank has done a tremendous job in exposing this Government and what they are taking part in.

MR. W. CARTER:

He can ask me a question tomorrow.

MR. TOBIN:

You wish he would ask you a question? Sure, no problem. We will ask you a question. There are going to be an awful lot of questions asked on Fisheries over the coming weeks and months, according to the telephone calls we have received in the last few days, particularly from the Northern Peninsula.

I understand my time is expiring.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

By leave!

MR. TOBIN:

By leave.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No leave.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, I have a few minutes to clue up. I say to the Minister that The City of St. John's Act is important to all of us. The direction this city takes is important to all of us. We have a responsibility, but, Sir, the contempt that has been shown in this Legislature today by the Government is something that has never been witnessed before, and I would challenge Cabinet Ministers to never let it happen again. At the same time, before I sit down I issue a challenge to the Members for St. John's to Stand in this House and say what they think of that contempt. Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to have a few words to say in this particular debate. First of all I would like to say that the Member for Burin - Placentia West puts on quite a show. As a matter of fact, I went over and talked to the Leader of the Opposition and indicated that he has a member there who puts on quite a show. He was born to be in Opposition and we are going to make sure he stays there for a long time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

He was born to be in Opposition.

There is no doubt about that.

There were a couple of things he said in the hour or so he was speaking that I thought I should respond to. Before I do, I want to congratulate him on his relevance. There is an awful lot of relevance to these things he was talking about.

MR. MATTHEWS:

(Inaudible) getting better.

MR. BAKER:

The thing I would like to comment on, Mr. Speaker, has to do with the way this bill is being dealt with. It is a serious matter, so I thought I would deal with it in that vein. The process, and I am sure the Member for Burin - Placentia West is listening outside, and he will probably learn from this, the process in terms of bills in the House is that the bill was introduced and given first reading, then it is given a second reading, and that is what we are into now. The second reading involves a debate. The first reading does not. During the second reading all Members have a chance to speak on the bill. Then it goes to Committee of the Whole where, again, there is a more detailed examination of the details of the bill, the minutiae that is involved with the bill. And after Members have spoken, and in that particular stage they can speak half a dozen times if they want to - there is no limit to the number of times they can speak as there is during second reading - and after the Opposition Members and Members on all sides have exhausted their pertinent comments on the bill, then it goes back to the whole House to receive third reading.

MR. SIMMS:

The next, after notice:

MR. BAKER:

I will get to that. I assure the Opposite House Leader that I will get to that point.

So then it goes to third reading. The Member for Burin - Placentia West seems to be under some misunderstanding. He says he cannot understand how this bill is now being debated in the House without having gone through Committee.

Now he must not be talking about the Committee stage of the House, because that comes after. He must be talking about the other thing.

AN HON. MEMBER:

The Legislative Review Committee.

MR. BAKER:

Yes, the Legislative Review Committees, and I would like to deal with that for a moment.

The Legislative Review Committees were set up to provide Members of the House, as well as the general public, with an opportunity to examine legislation and to comment on it. It is set up on an interim basis, in a sense, that there is no legislative basis for it right now -

MR. SIMMS:

Yes, there is.

MR. BAKER:

- and there are no rules and procedures, and so on, that we have specifically designed for these particular Committees. There is no agreement yet on exactly how the Legislative Committees fit into the whole process, except that they are to provide Opposition Members and

others as well, the Members on this side as well as the general public, to have a chance to look at the legislation ahead of time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a very noble objective.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I do not wish to interrupt my friend.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

A point of order?

MR. SIMMS:

Yes, a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader on a point of order?

MR. SIMMS:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do not wish to interrupt my friend, but I want to be clear on this. I thought I just heard him say that there is no agreement in place on how the Legislative Review Committees are going to work. I thought I heard him say that, but I am sure I must be misquoting him, or perhaps it was a slip of the tongue on his part. Because certainly there is an agreement which we have in place, an agreement of the Legislature. We have an agreement in place on how the Legislative Review process is going to work, and that was that bills would be referred to the Committee before they came to the House for debate, and we have done it with every other bill that we have debated in the House so far. That is the only point we make. Certainly there is an agreement. If there is no agreement, then we might as well

scrap it for now, and forever and a day, until such time as he sees fit to put it into a firm set of house rules, a booklet or something of that nature. But I understood there was an agreement, and Members on this side understood there was an agreement. If he is now saying there is no agreement, well, then, the whole process is falling apart, which would not surprise me.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. The Government House Leader, to the point of order.

MR. BAKER:

To that point of order, yes. The Opposition House Leader, I believe, is mistaken. The agreement was that the Legislative Committees would be formed with the objectives that I stipulated and they have been agreed to. The Opposition House Leader also knows that in the discussions leading up to the setting up of the Committees, we talked in terms of the fact that for this first sitting, this first session where the Committees were in operation - the Opposition House Leader, I am sure, remembers this very well - that there may be instances where bills would be dealt with in Committee before they were dealt with in second reading in the House, in which case the Committee could report back to Cabinet if they wanted to get the changes made before the bills were actually printed for second reading.

And the other instance, where Bills were not dealt with by Committee before they were debated in the House, there could be amendments made during the normal Committee stage of the House if amendments were necessary. It was explained very well to Members of

the Opposition that in this first run-through there would be instances where there would be exceptions that would have to be made. If we do not use our common sense and our discretion in introducing this process, I am afraid the process will never be introduced, simply because the legislative process is considerably slowed down in the beginning by these Committees, considerably slowed down. There are some Bills now ready to go to the Committees that I had, in my naivety perhaps a month or so ago, assumed we could deal with in this fall sitting. But now I know, after communicating with the Committee Chairmen and with the Committees, that these pieces of Legislation are going to be held by the Committee and their examination is going to be done during January and February, which means that these Bills will not be dealt with by the House until the Spring sitting.

But there are some Bills that of necessity had to be done now and therefore could not go through the protracted Legislative Review Committee, or the Legislative Committee could not go through that, so what we are seeing now, Mr. Speaker, in reference to this point of order is an example - and I was about to explain what happened - of a Bill that we are going to have to deal with before it goes through the Committee process, because we do not have the time to have all the hearings, and so on, on this particular Bill.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader, to the point of order.

MR. SIMMS:

Well, the same point of order, if I may, Mr. Speaker. This is a

very important matter, that we have a clear understanding of what is supposed to transpire. I am trying to read quickly what the Government House Leader said, in fact, on June 30 in the House, when he made the decision. I will need a moment or two to read through that just to make sure, but did I now understand him to say that there will be exceptions to the general agreement, or understanding, of sending these Bills to the Legislative Review Committees, there will be exceptions where some Bills by necessity, in the opinion of the Government, will not be referred to the Legislative Review Committees and they will go to the House directly? Is that what he is saying?

MR. SPEAKER:

If there is an emergency situation, obviously the Government has to govern and has to bring things directly to the Legislature. There may be instances where they have to, yes.

MR. SIMMS:

I am asking if he would answer me specifically this question: Is he saying that they will be occasions - exceptions, I think, is the word he used - where certain Bills, certain pieces of Legislation will not be referred to the Legislative Review Committees but will go directly to the House? Is that what he is saying?

MR. BAKER:

Yes.

MR. SIMMS:

And this one here, for example, would be one of these exceptions, the one we are dealing with today.

MR. BAKER:

It is now.

MR. SIMMS:

Yes. Well, that is rather unusual, and we should clarify it. Because the real fact of the matter is that this bill was indeed referred to the Legislative Review Committee. You cannot have it both ways. It is either going to be referred to the Legislative Review Committee for their input and follow the process that we agreed to on June 30, or it is not going to be referred to the Committee. Now, I understand that this bill has, in fact, been referred to the Legislative Review Committee.

MR. BAKER:

Absolutely!

MR. SIMMS:

Well, then, why are we debating it here today? It is supposed to go one way or the other: through the Committee and back to the House, or not to the Committee and straight to the House.

MR. BAKER:

Do not be silly.

MR. SIMMS:

Now, you have been sitting next to Clyde too long when you start using that quote, 'Do not be silly'. That is a fact. We need to know what is going on. We have to operate under some rules, so what rules are we operating under, Mr. Speaker? That is all I want to know. If the Government House Leader can clarify it for us, then great! But if he cannot, please stay in his seat and do not try to confuse or muddle it any further.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the point of order. What we have here is a difference of opinion between two hon. Members. There is no point of order.

MR. SIMMS:

A difference between one hon. Member.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to say through you to the Opposition House Leader that the kind of sophistry we were just subjected to is a bit out of place for him. The exclusiveness of his comments, the fact that if something is referred to the Committee it cannot go to the House, and if something is referred to the House it cannot go to the Committee, is a silly kind of argument to be getting into at this point. I just explained to him exactly what the process was of legislation going through the House, and that is exactly what we are going through. This particular bill, as a courtesy, was given to the Committee as quickly as possible. That is fine. The Committee does not have time to deal with it, obviously. We need to get it through, so we are putting it through the House. It is very simple.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Why did you not give it to them a week ago?

MR. BAKER:

I am going to explain that.

If I may, I would like to explain that this Bill obviously, if we were going to use the Committee, should have gone to the Committee a week or two ago. I suppose a lot of it is my fault, directly. Sometimes in the system, as some Members opposite will realize, things do not happen as quickly as

you would like them to happen, and because of an oversight on my part, I did not stay on top of this particular bill; I was perhaps concerned more with some of the other bills that are in the process of being put together, The Auditor General's Act and things like that, and I kind of overlooked this piece of legislation which, on the surface, was a minor piece of legislation. I did not push it as hard as I should have, and it tended to take longer in the system.

MR. SIMMS:

Why did you not push it?

MR. BAKER:

Well, it was my responsibility and I take the responsibility. It was my responsibility to ensure that legislation was dealt with expeditiously, and we ran into some problems in getting it through the system. Unfortunately, it was not given to the Committee in time. We are now at the point, as the Opposition House Leader alluded to a moment ago, where we would like to go through second reading, committee stage and third reading before the House adjourns tomorrow. I will be quite honest and frank about that. That is exactly what we would like to do. I mention it now, because I want to give members opposite ample time to consider this possibility and make up their minds as to what they want to do with it. The member for Burin - Placentia West in his rhetoric was perhaps a little bit of an alarmist and exaggerated the things that would happen in terms of if the Bill does not get through the House. However, I am sure there is enough co-operative effort still existing -

MR. SIMMS:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader on a point of order.

MR. SIMMS:

I do not mean to interrupt the hon. Government House Leader again, but we have to get this clear. I have to understand what it is he is saying. I now quote from his statement of June 30, from Hansard: "Mr. Baker:" - talking about the Committees being set up - "This will provide an opportunity for legislation to be examined prior to discussions in the House so that we never" - never - "get into the situation where, all of a sudden, because of time constraints or something else, ...legislation get rushed through the House."

Now having said that, Mr. Speaker, I submit that the Government House Leader is now saying, 'Oh, but there are exceptions.' There is no mention in his statement, I must tell him, of exceptions, none whatsoever!

MR. BAKER:

Read the whole thing.

MR. SIMMS:

I did read the whole thing.

MR. BAKER:

Read it out.

MR. SIMMS:

Then you go on to appoint the Committees. That is all, basically. 'Never should we get into the situation where, all of a sudden, because of time constraints...' Certainly we have time constraints here. The bill comes up for debate on Thursday, and second reading debate could take a couple of days. So we

finish second reading tomorrow morning. When are you going to do a Committee of the Whole, next Tuesday?

MR. BAKER:

Saturday.

MR. SIMMS:

When are you going to do third reading? You have to give notice each day of all these stages of the legislation. And having said what you said, about never getting into a situation where because of time constraints we should have to rush pieces of legislation through the House, he is now doing precisely that very thing as Government House Leader. Not only is he fully responsible, but the Minister, who is the Minister responsible for this piece of legislation, should have been on the Government House Leader's back, should have been asking, where is that Bill? We have to get it on the Order Paper. We have to get it into the House because of the time it will take.

The Government House Leader is certainly not being consistent, and I am afraid that we are going to have this whole legislative review process falling apart if we do not get a handle on it. If he continues to botch things like this, the whole process will fall apart and we are all going to be in deep, deep trouble and it will never work.

MR. BAKER:

To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The that point of order, the hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

I would like to inform the

Opposition House Leader that the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs did, in fact, do his job. He wondered why the legislation had not been brought in. He was fully aware of the situation and did his job. There is no doubt about it. He is an excellent Minister. He is doing a tremendous job.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

I would also like to say to him, with reference to the statement when the Committees were introduced, I still stand by every single thing that was said then. I stand by every single bit of it. Obviously, the reference I made was to the situation -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order!

It being Thursday, at four of the clock, I have to interrupt the hon. Government House Leader to inform the House of the questions for The Late Show.

Question one: 'I would like to advise you that I am not satisfied with the answer to my question on tax benefits for northern and isolated areas by the Minister of Finance. The hon. the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes.'

Question 2: 'I am unsatisfied with the answer given by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs to my question regarding funding for the LSPU Hall. The hon. the Member for St. John's East.'

Question 3: 'I am not satisfied with answers I have received to date from the Minister of Fisheries. I would like to debate

same during Thursday's Late Show. The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.'

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was responding to the point of order and was saying that I stand by everything I said when I introduced the Committees. Obviously, I was referring to the situation in the past, where a lot of legislation was gone through in a day without proper consideration. That will never happen again. But as with every general rule, there may, from time to time, be exceptions, and I am sure the Opposition House Leader and everybody recognizes that this has to be.

If an emergency arises some time two years down the road that requires immediate action by the Legislature, there may be something that we cannot put through a two-month process, it needs to be dealt with quickly, then it will be brought directly to the House to be dealt with quickly. We cannot substitute the Committee examination for the House procedure. We cannot! But in every case possible, the legislation will be provided to the Committee as soon as possible.

MR. SIMMS:

I do not want to be interrupting the hon. Member, but still on the point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Just to follow through on this a

little tiny bit further' now, can we expect that similar action will occur in the future? But more importantly than that, can the President of the Council, the Government House Leader, explain to the House how, then, since this is, I presume, quote, 'an emergency piece of legislation' -

MR. BAKER:

I explained that. That is not what (inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:

Well, my understanding of it from a lay person's point of view, not being knowledgeable in parliamentary procedural matters, is that unless this bill passes this House by tomorrow, then The City of St. John's must hold an election on Tuesday, by law.

The Council will stay in place until December 1, but there has to be a three-week notice before an election and all those kinds of things. So is the President of the Council saying then that this Bill does not have to pass by tomorrow? He is shaking his head. I presume he said it does not have to pass by tomorrow. Could he explain that for me? Because we would like to know.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

A very brief response. I have already pointed out to the Opposition House Leader and Members opposite - I believe he was chatting with somebody else and did not hear.

MR. SIMMS:

Perhaps.

MR. BAKER:

I already pointed out that we would like to have second reading today, and the Committee stage and third reading finished by tomorrow. I assured myself that there was enough goodwill and co-operative spirit here to allow this to be done. I made that request a few moments ago, so that will straighten out the problem.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. the Opposition House Leader, to the point of order.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Government House Leader can tell me to whom he made the request? Because I certainly did not hear it, number one, and while I am on my feet, I may as well finish my argument. If the Government House Leader expects to get second reading passed today in the House, well, then, on behalf of Members on this side of the House I can now inform him he will not get second reading approval today. There is no intention on this side to do it. We have too many Members on this side who want to talk about the botched effort of the Government in bringing in this piece of legislation. So, I am afraid that will not happen.

Now he said to me in one breath a moment ago, - he is shaking his head while I am saying this - 'it is an emergency. We have to have it passed by tomorrow. No, no, we do not have to.' Then he gets up and says, 'We hope we can get co-operation to get through Committee stage and third reading tomorrow,' which is not possible, unless the Government House Leader

makes a formal request. You just do not get up and say, I wonder would you mind going through all the stages of the bill today? I mean, that is not the way it works and he should know that by now. He has been there seven months. My God! In seven months he should be experienced.

AN HON. MEMBER:

And it takes unanimous consent.

MR. SIMMS:

It takes unanimous consent. That is another matter I will point out to the President of the Council.

So, it could be a very serious and difficult situation. There is, however, one parliamentary procedural mechanism available to the Government House Leader if he wishes to ensure that it goes through the process sometime within the next twenty-four hours, and that is, if he wishes to, he may give notice of closure before Orders Of The Day tomorrow, I will tell him. That is when it must be placed, just in case he wants to do it. And, I would suggest to him very strongly, he may want to give serious consideration -

MR. BAKER:

It is no good. It has to be done today.

MR. SIMMS:

Now, we can give agreement and approval.

MR. BAKER:

It has to be done today.

MR. SIMMS:

No. You will see there are precedents for it. In any event, if he wishes to do that, then he might wish to give some consideration to it, and that may very well be the only mechanism by

which this Bill will be rammed through the House. Because this whole effort has been botched by the Government, as pointed out by my colleague, the critic for Municipal Affairs. And I can say to the Government House Leader that we do not take that lightly. We do not take the fact that the Parliament of Newfoundland, the Legislature of Newfoundland has been overlooked, totally overlooked, taken for granted. And it is going to be very difficult to get co-operation on a matter such as that with the approach that the Government House Leader is using. He says he would like to get through all of the things tomorrow. He does not even talk to the Opposition.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What would happen if we do not deal with this. What would happen in St. John's?

MR. SIMMS:

Well I would suggest now, if this does not get passed by tomorrow, and next Tuesday would be the election, I would say that the Government have an ace up their sleeve. They have something in their back pocket that they can count on if it becomes absolutely necessary, and that is - would you like to guess? The Minister of Education would like to guess. I would say they would press into service an already over worked individual in this Province, a man who is absolutely dedicated to running the Province. They could always second the Chairman of the Economic Recovery Commission to run the City of St. John's.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Because, as the editorial in The

Telegram says today, he is running everything else. But anyway, Mr. Speaker, that is being a tiny bit facetious. This is a serious matter.

AN HON. MEMBER:

A tiny bit!

MR. SIMMS:

A tiny bit facetious, but this is a serious matter and it is important that we have the rules.

The Government House Leader need not be over there waving for me and telling me to sit down. I will sit down when the Speaker tells me to sit down, not the Government House Leader. He must learn, he is the House Leader, not the Speaker of the House. There is a big difference.

So, Mr. Speaker, concluding my few preliminary remarks on this point of order, it is important that we know what the rules are going to be from a general perspective. But more importantly, it is important that the Government House Leader understand and use the process of co-operation. Perhaps he could take some advice from my friend the Minister of Fisheries.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is right. A good man.

MR. SIMMS:

A very co-operative individual, and knows how to talk to people. And perhaps the Government House Leader could take a lesson from him. And if he wants to see this Bill rammed through the House, then he will have to do it. We will have to give consideration to any request that he makes formally. And as far as I am concerned as the House Leader for the Opposition, I have not been

approached at all to make any arrangements or to make any deals, nor will I be susceptible to any deals at the present mood that I am in.

MR. FLIGHT:

You were too busy in Wooddale, anyhow.

MR. SIMMS:

Wooddale?

MR. BAKER:

A final comment if you would, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader for the point of order.

MR. BAKER:

It is very difficult to determine what his point of order was, and the relevance of an awful lot of what he said, Mr. Speaker, however, I did earlier - before all of this fuss started - make the request in the House.

So, I did indicate what I would like to see happen before we got tangled up in all of this nonsense. I am not cognizant of any formal process that has to be gone through for any such request, because such a process does not exist, as the Opposition House Leader fully realizes. He makes all kinds of those statements and tries to sound authoritative, but in actual fact, much of what he says has no basis in fact, in procedure, or anything else.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest to the Opposition House Leader, that if in fact there are Members Opposite that want to have something of substance to say about this, if there are, then I do not see why he took up so much time in the House on foolishness.

I cannot understand that. I would dearly love, Mr. Speaker, to see the Member of St. John's east express her opinion on this particular Bill, and I am sure that within very few seconds she will be on her feet. I am looking forward to hear what she has to say.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Is that all you have to say -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order. To the point of order, please!

I have listened to the comments by the hon. gentlemen, and there is a difference, of course, in the interpretation of that agreement, but there is no valid point of order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Member for St. John's East.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Every time I have the great privilege of listening to the hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West (Mr. Tobin) I feel very inferior because I do not know how long it is going to take me sitting in this House to be able to fly with the flights of rhetoric, and the passion, and the consistency, and the integrity, and the pointedness of the arguments of that hon. gentleman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:

However, on every bad day there is always one bright spot. And today's bright spot for me is that in his remarks he mentioned that his ancestors came from the Island of Oderin and so did mine. So I am going to search my genealogy and see if somewhere back there we may be cousins and I may have that latent talent, all that will be required is to sit here long enough, listening attentatively to the wisdom of the hon. Member, and I may be as good as he is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Do not blush Glenn, do not be so modest!

MR. TOBIN:

(Inaudible).

MS DUFF:

I was totally amazed by the vast knowledge of the Member on the City of St. John's and its problems and its concerns, and his passionate defence of the need to put through this bill. But as a Member for a St. John's District I think it is incumbent upon me to at least express a few words on this bill that is under debate. Now we have been talking about two separate things, one is the content of the amendment, and the other is the procedures. And I would have again to defer to the hon. Opposition Leader who certainly knows an awful lot more about procedures than I do.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He does not.

MS DUFF:

Oh, indeed he does. I have absolute faith in every thing he tells me.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:
But as a Member of the Committee -

AN HON. MEMBER:
Look who is in the Chair.

MS DUFF:
I cannot believe it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:
Oh, my God!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please! Order, please!

MS DUFF:
I would most certainly have to congratulate the -

MR. TOBIN:
(Inaudible) book.

MS DUFF:
Does that mean that I have to refer to hon. the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island (Mr. Walsh) as, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Oh, yes.

MS DUFF:
Oh, my lord! How many distractions do you have to have in one day when you are trying to make a speech?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MS DUFF:
To get serious for a moment about this. This is a piece of legislation which is brief, but not necessarily minor, because it is absolutely required in order to solve a little conundrum which we need not have been here debating at the eleventh hour if, in fact, the Government could have been a little speedier in terms of writing up these two pages. It does not seem to me to have been a great difficulty to take an amendment which is essentially very similar to amendments already existing in other acts, to translate them to the City of St. John's Elections Act and to have put them through the Committee.

But that point, in fact, has already been made through our Committee, to the hon. Government House Leader, and it has been made very forcefully that if these Committees are going to work, there can be no exceptions to the pieces of legislation that are put before these Committees. And I know that the Government House Leader, I have great respect for him to, I know that he is an intelligent man, a man of tremendous integrity and this is not a matter of contempt. It is not a matter of anything other than possibly a little ineptitude, because the Government is new, the Minister is new, the Minister is overburdened, and I am prepared to let it pass, because I know it will never happen again.

MR. SIMMS:
He is not nearly as intelligent as your own House Leader though.

MS DUFF:
Well!

MR. SIMMS:
You should make that for the

record. Would you put that in the record.

MS DUFF:

Oh, he is a very nice man.

In any case this particular specific bill is both separate and specific to the City of St. John's, and it concerns our municipality perhaps only, not more than any other. And it is extremely necessary because the current act does not provide for the deferment unlike other municipal acts. We are not dealing with precedents or new principles here. The principle of deferment is already contained in The Municipalities Elections Act and in the acts of the other two cities. So it is not new. For some reason it was overlooked, and I think now we need to try and deal with it.

In terms of the substance of the two clauses in the act, I would just like to briefly get into the issues surrounding amalgamation. The Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs (Mr. Gullage) raised this issue of amalgamation at some point during the early part of this summer. And this was supported by the City of St. John's, in concept, if not in specifics. I think the city did not necessarily agree with the specific proposal that the Minister had but certainly it was recognized that amalgamation is a serious and important issue, and I cannot do less than treat it in that manner. I am sorry, I have to treat it seriously and deal with it seriously.

We recognize, I think, in the City of St. John's that there is a need to rationalize local government structures in the Province. That need has been evident for some

time and I think it is also recognized by most responsible local government leaders throughout the Province. However, it is also recognized that there are different circumstances in different communities, and in different areas of the Province, and therefore there are different solutions and none of the answers are going to be easy. But, I would have to commend the Minister for at least putting it on the table.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:

When this issue was raised the city was approached, we found out we were one of the 110 on the Minister's list, and we were asked to consider amalgamation. The council recognized that there was, in the Northeast Avalon regions, a need and an opportunity to engage in a very important exercise that dealt with really the future of the Northeast Avalon region, and the rationalization of local government in that region. Hopefully, that is an exercise that can be conducted in co-operation with neighbouring municipalities because there is no point being parochial about these problems. They have to be addressed co-operatively.

Now, I am not as sure as the Minister is that his specific suggestions are the right ones, but, I think the exercise we are going through right now is to try and consider, first of all, what the problems are, what the best way of dealing with them is, and what kinds of local government structures will be best able to deal with that. So, in order to make a rational decision, not a quick decision, not a quick yes or

no, not to throw out the baby with the bath water, I think, very responsibly the Municipal Council of the City of St. John's said, this is going to take time. We need information, we need analysis, we need to define the options before we can throw this on the table as a political issue. There is no point having an election when people do not know what it is they are trying to deal with. So, for that reason, the council did respond to the Minister's suggestion that if time was needed elections could be deferred, and on September 14 the Mayor wrote to the Minister requesting that the election be deferred. Now, as far as the council knew, that had all been attended to, and I think the council is very surprised today to find out that this is still being debated in the House.

The Bill is a direct response to that request, and for that reason I feel it is incumbent upon me, as a St. John's member, to support it. Having said that which is positive, even if I am on the other side of the House, because I personally believe this is one of the most serious and important issues facing local Government in the Province today. I have to also say that the city, and me personally, have problems with many aspects of this. We have problems with the timing. Why was it raised so late and so close to a municipal election? We have problems with the lack of information. When municipalities who were put on the list attempted to find out the kind of basic information that was needed, in order to put together a submission in order to analyse the situation, there was no information of any depth there to be gotten. We have problems, and continue to have

problems, with the lack of clarity of intent. Where is this process going? Where is it going to end? We certainly have problems with the mixed messages that come out, when the Minister says one thing and the Premier says something else. Because many municipalities have taken this seriously, and are willing to rise above their own small parochial interests and look at what needs to be done in the interest of their regions. They are putting a lot of effort and a lot of expense in some cases, into developing submissions for this amalgamation procedure, and it will be extremely disturbing to those municipalities, that at the end of the day we have such an amount of political confusion in all of this that we end up with a mess, and forevermore destroy the opportunity to deal with this very, very serious issue. I sincerely hope that is not going to happen. I do not have any intention of spending hours talking about this. The main point, I think, that needs to be made in terms of this legislation, is that the concept is a valid and important one, and that this bill is necessary even if it is late, and for that reason I am going to support it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for St. John's East Extern.

MR. PARSONS:

Mr. Speaker, I would first of all like to say to the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island, I do not agree with the sentiments of the previous speaker. I think that if the Premier at some time needs a prime contender for the Chair, he has one. I think that he fits the

Chair real well. And he certainly looks well to me here. Of course, I have to say that, I have to be fair to the legislator and say that because his original ancestry was from Outer Cove, and I am not real sure that he is not related to me.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Who?

MR. PARSONS:
The Speaker.

I also want to compliment my colleague, he is not in the House, for that tremendous speech that he gave. I too have to say to the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, as to why people say now, the House Leader and the Minister, how important this bill was. When I sat here like all the rest of the Members the other day, and heard the hon. the Minister of Finance, and he did a ritual reading out about all the important Acts that he had to deal with. There was no talk then of the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs getting up and saying that he wanted to present this amendment to The St. John's Election Act. There was no talk of that at all.

Let me tell you something about some of the things that he mentioned. He had fifty two Acts within his Department. Some of the interesting ones that I found: The Debt Duties Act, The Horse Racing Act, there is a whole page of it that he wasted the time of the House telling about The Horse Racing Act. There is only him and my friend in the Goulds left. And an election having to be held Tuesday, now the hon. House Leader tells us how important this is. Where is the rationale behind it? Incompetent,

yes, at the highest order. Where is our Minister gone?

The other thing that I wonder about is, that today that he brought in that piece of legislation, or the amendment to the piece of legislation, I wonder if the Premier had been here if he would have been allowed to bring it in. I think he brought it in behind the Premier's back. While the cat is away, the mouse plays. I even cannot find the mouse, is he gone down on the floor over there?

I too have some real concerns and I do not have much time to express them. But I am certainly going to express to the House my feelings as it pertains to this bill because this bill was brought into being by amalgamation, and I am certainly going to take the opportunity to speak about the amalgamation issue as it pertains to my District.

I want to say to the Minister that I was surprised first of all when the Minister brought in his concept of a super city. The rationale again behind it behooves me, a super city. We only have 500,000 people from Cape to Cape. The Minister brings in something that he dreams about,, that we could bring about another Toronto, or another Montreal or whatever. That is gone now. There is nothing at all about that, and this amalgamation bit is to the forefront.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister, I want to say to the Minister that there are groups of people out there, perhaps in some areas amalgamation may be better than sliced bread, I do not know. But for him to send people across this Province spending money,

people's money, to ask people that have already categorically stated that they want no part of amalgamation. I represent St. John's East Extern, every community in that area is viable. Not viable there may be someone over there who will say, well, they need water and sewer. So do many areas in Newfoundland. That concept will not change. We will still need water and sewer if we have amalgamation.

Mr. Speaker, it is now 4:30 p.m., it is Thursday, and I will adjourn the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

It being Thursday, and time for The Late Show, the Chair recognizes the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes.

Debate on the Adjournment
[Late Show]

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HEARN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. May I say to you before I start that you certainly look the part, and undoubtedly whenever the next shuffle comes around or following retirements that are pending, and so on, you will undoubtedly find yourself in the Chair. It must keep you extremely busy as Chairman of Caucus, to try to keep such a bunch in order, and to monitor Meech Lake constantly, and still operate as Chairman. I am delighted to see you there.

Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, I asked the Minister of Finance a question

concerning the report of the Task Force on Tax Benefits for Northern and Isolated Areas. This is a report that has recently been submitted to the hon. Michael Wilson, the Minister of Finance, recommending that the whole island section of Newfoundland be eliminated from receiving the benefits that most residents in practically all of the Province, actually, had been receiving since 1987. In the Budget Speech of 1986, actually, he announced a new regime that would permit people from most of our Province to receive benefits that were originally designated for people in northern and isolated areas, and, for all the right reasons. Because, in the submissions that were made to the task force that travelled the Province, most areas highlighted the fact that the cost of goods and services, as delivered to and in most of rural Newfoundland, were certainly much more costly than in most parts of Canada, certainly in the mainland section of the Dominion, the southernmost parts, in particular.

When the task force came round and had several meetings throughout the Province, it was unanimously agreed by all the reports that I read, from the submissions that I saw and the ones I witnessed personally, not only did the people from the areas already receiving the benefit, say to the task force, 'Yes, it is a good idea. We do get back some extra benefits now on our income tax to offset the extra costs that we must experience in a place like this,' but they went above and beyond that, to say that not only should our own respective areas qualify, but the Province generally, Newfoundland, as an Island, and the Labrador section, should qualify to receive these

benefits, because we should get some extra break to compensate for the cost of goods and services here.

And the members of the committee, listening to the arguments put forth, had to agree. And I attended meetings where individuals and groups, who presented briefs to them, outlined clearly the extra costs that they went through.

Here in the Province, when you look at people who live any distance from the main centres, especially the main distribution centres, and you realize that people have to drive a hundred miles to go to hospital, people have to drive a hundred miles or more to go swimming or to a movie, that the goods and services that they pick up in their communities, the goods they buy at the local stores, have to be transported sometimes in excess of a hundred miles. Then, there is the extra fuel they burn, and we can go on and on.

So every one agreed totally that the extra benefits they received under the new Federal fiscal regime was certainly an asset to the people of the Province. Now when the report has been submitted, perhaps due to the reason in tightening up at the Federal level, and to coincide with that, the report recommends the elimination of such benefits in the island section of the Province, and it not only affects part of my District, it affects all the south coast, it affects the Member for the Strait of Belle Isle, basically all of his region is affected, and undoubtedly the Member for Twillingate, and we can go right around the island, because most areas either selected

sections or total areas benefitted from the tax breaks. When the report recommended the elimination of these breaks, especially, especially at a time like this, I thought the Minister would be up in Ottawa furiously thumping on the Minister of Finance's desk, as he does on his own when he gets excited, but he was not there, and when I asked him if he had gone up, he said no, when I asked him was he against it, he said no, and then I showed him part of the Budget Speech that he read earlier this year which shows that this Government and this Minister was against it, so he is not here to say no again, and I hope that the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations will respond, because all the working people, who are the people who pay taxes, have been hit through most of Newfoundland by the elimination of these benefits, so I look to the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations to explain why this Government has not gone ferociously, viciously to Ottawa, to demand that the benefits not be eliminated as suggested by the report on the Task Force on tax benefits for Northern and isolated areas.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you Mr. Speaker. First of all let me say that in essence an awful lot of what the Member just said was absolutely right. But I remember a few short hours ago, or a few short minutes ago, somebody saying do not blame everything on Ottawa, somebody from that side, do not blame everything on Ottawa. I say to you Mr. Speaker how can we help sometimes blaming things on Ottawa. I would like to

remind Members opposite that in 1984, in 1985, when the Tories took over in Ottawa, the infamous Nielson Task Force report, that in essence recommended just about the virtual close down of this Province. The suggestions with regards to the cut backs and cutting out and stopping all kinds of fisheries programs. The changes for the sake of efficiency, the concern for reducing the deficit, and we all suffered through some years since then, hoping that they would not institute all those measures. Now we see another measure being brought in, and let me say before I get to that, Mr. Speaker, that the Northern tax allowance situation was a mess, was an absolute mess. People on one side of Gander Bay and Rogers Cove and that area were receiving it. People on the other side, a stone's throw away were not receiving it, both the same distance away from a population centre. But the point is, that the thing was an absolute mess, and it was manipulated, it was manipulated by politicians so that they would make a representation and if they were good friends of the Ministers up there, they would get a few communities added and so on and it was done in a haphazard way. It was manipulated, and I know of one MP who was quite successful in doing that, so it was a mess. The only solution, obviously, is the one suggested by the Member, that the whole of the island of Newfoundland, the whole of the island as well as the Labrador portion be included. It makes sense. We have all kinds of extra costs because of where we live, and the disadvantage of position does not simply go by the number of degrees North of the Equator you live. There are all kinds of other considerations and

the whole of the island should have been included, and I was in favour, and on this side we were in favour of doing something about the mess they had there, and making the whole island eligible for this allowance. What did they do instead? You realize, Mr. Speaker, that northern tax allowance means, I just forget the exact amount, I think somewhere between \$50 million to \$100 million each year coming into this Province. It is over \$50 million, is it not a year?

MR. RIDEOUT:
\$85 million.

MR. BAKER:
\$80 million and \$85 million the Leader of the Opposition says.

It means that that much money is coming into our economy every year and believe it or not that has made one heck of a difference in the last couple of years. It has made one heck of a difference, and the Members opposite who were then in Government, recognize that this is one of the factors that contributed to greater revenues than were projected. So it means a lot. If, in fact, the whole were included it would probably mean in the vicinity of \$200 million a year, or more, coming into this Province that would then circulate in the Province and stimulate our economy. But what do they do in Ottawa?

MR. DECKER:
The Tories in Ottawa.

MR. BAKER:
What do the Tories in Ottawa do? What do they do? They are concerned now about the deficit. So where do they look?

MR. DECKER:

They look to Newfoundland.

MR. BAKER:

They look to Newfoundland.

MR. DECKER:

They unload it.

MR. HEARN:

He is eliminated.

MR. DECKER:

They unload it on us.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You asked for it.

MR. BAKER:

They look to Newfoundland to save some of their money just like they are looking to Newfoundland with their sales tax proposal. It is the same thing. Taking money out of this Province.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You are agreeing with it.

MR. BAKER:

Now, Mr. Speaker, -

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

The late show provides only five minutes for each debate. And my understanding is that they are gone beyond that now and there are other questions to be debated.

MR. BAKER:

Just to that point of order, Mr. Speaker, very briefly. If the Opposition House Leader were very alert and in the House and paying attention he would have realized that the first speaker went seven minutes and that is why my time was cut a little short. But I will agree with him, Mr. Speaker, we support the basic premise put forth by the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn). The

whole of the Province should be included for the northern tax allowance.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the point of order, there is a difference of agreement in time, and I will allow the Member at least another little while to respond.

The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, I think I will stop at this point because we have two more questions to deal with and we only have twenty minutes left.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Very co-operative!

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for St. John's East.

MS DUFF:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS DUFF:

I want to deal again just for a few moments with the matter of the grant for the LSPU Hall, and I would appreciate it if the Minister responsible would put down the paper and listen, because it is directed very closely to him. Now just for the interest of Members who may not be familiar with the LSPU Hall, because it is a small facility in St. John's and Question Period does not allow a lot of elaboration. It is the only artist run facility in the whole Province of Newfoundland. Other facilities are Government run and therefore do not have problems with their capital funding. It has also made a contribution to the cultural life

of the Province that goes way beyond the appearances of that very small building. It has been the incubator for some of the best creative talent in this Province. It has produced Bob Joy, who got his start there, who has ended up as a very well known movie actor in the United States. It has produced Chris Warrick, who is now directing plays on Broadway. It has produced CODCO, who have a television program. So without hammering that point to death, I do not think that any Member in this House could deny the value of that facility to the cultural life of this Province.

Now when the Minister was first appointed Minister of this Department, I think the Arts Community were very pleased, because it was a Minister who appeared to listen, but after seven months of talking to that Minister what they are now beginning to say is, he listens but he does not hear. And, if he hears, he does not understand, because nothing is happening for the arts. I think what has happened is, that the arts and culture and heritage in this Province have been the big victims of the Government restructuring, where they have been dumped in with a huge Department with an overtaxed Minister, who has not even had the time to appoint the Directors of Culture and Heritage, and nobody gives a hoot about what happens to the arts any more in this Province. There is going to be an explosion in the Arts Community.

I want to specifically address three points that the Minister raised in his question. The first coming out of Hansard the answer is that, 'My Department does not have a capital grants program and

is therefore unable to honour the request.' That was the Minister's simple answer to this request.

Now, I want to point out to the Minister that he did not necessarily need to have a capital grants program in order to bring to his Cabinet colleagues, a one time only capital grant request, and that there is a good precedent for that, the former Government has already supported the LSPU Hall in 1981 in a manner very similar, where there was cost-shared funding from two levels of Government. It is the only way in which the LSPU Hall can get any funds.

The second point I would like to address is the requirement for local sources of funding and the Minister pointing out that the Provincial Government does not have to support the grant. Well, that is the same kind of sophistry we are getting every day from the Premier. I know, and I said if you want to read Hansard, that it is local sources that are required, not necessarily provincial sources, but the reality is that the LSPU Hall cannot raise close to \$100,000 from the local sources in this community, they are not there because hospitals and the universities and every other group called for in the book, is out with a begging bowl, and the arts are at the low end of the totem pole. And at this late time, at D-Day on this application, that is the last resort, they have no other choice. So if the Government does not come across they are out because they cannot match that amount.

Now the other point is, perhaps a little more serious. I mean, the Minister is saying we will wait

for the Federal commitment and then we will put in the Provincial commitment. But that is a cat and mouse game. That is a double dare. That is a game we stopped playing when we were ten years old. You know, you go first, no, you go first. It is just not worthy of comment. Because if the project is important to the Province, it should be the Province who will fund it. But the most important point of all has to do with his comments about John Butt's letter, and he read out a letter from John Butt indicating that he would not support it. But he neglected to read another letter that was in the file. And that letter states and I will read 'I am prepared to request in the budgetary estimates of my Department, under Cultural Affairs Division, an amount of \$45,723 in the fiscal year 1989-1990. And I will point out that this budget request will be contingent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MS DUFF:

Now that is all you were asked to do, Mr. Minister, and I would suggest in the interest of time, tomorrow is the last day, save time, change your signature, change the date, and FAX John Butt's letter up to Ottawa.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

Mr. Speaker, I thought I had answered the question in Question Period. In fact, I said at the time and I will just repeat

myself, that we do not have a Capital Grants Program in place. And, in fact, our information tells us that Federal funding is not contingent on Provincial funding at all. And their funding could stand on its own, and the LSPU group, the Resource Centre, was asked to revise their application to Ottawa and submit it on a stand alone basis, and I assume that they did that. I am not sure whether they did or not, but they certainly were asked to do that and we are advised that we did not have Capital Grants funding in place. A new policy was not identified by the previous Government. It was certainly not reflected in the mandate of the previous Government that I am aware of. There is no indication of it.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It was not done though?

MR. GULLAGE:

And it was not followed through. And the fact of the matter is until we develop a policy, until we decide to develop such a policy, which would have to be province-wide, of course, it could not just be for one centre. It would have to apply to every other community in the Province, and capital funding for the Arts would have to apply everywhere. Until we develop such a policy my answer as given before stands.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Take the Minister's salary and

give it to the LSPU Hall, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing in this Province today one of the major failures we have seen in the Fishery in a long, long time. During this week we see a Minister and a Government that is not prepared at all, for the first time in five years, to participate financially in an emergency response program. More importantly, Mr. Speaker, we see a Minister and a Government that just cries over the fact that they had no input into the criteria surrounding that program.

Mr. Speaker, we know today, from hundreds and hundreds of phone calls around this Province, that 75 or 80 per cent of the people who do not presently qualify for UI benefits because of a failure in the Fishery, will not qualify for the Emergency Response Program because of the strait jacket criteria that the federal CEIC, the Federal Government, is imposing on that particular program. We wanted to know over the last couple of days in this House whether or not the Minister

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. RIDEOUT:

I do not care what they are, whether they are communists, but this Government has a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to go to the Government of Canada and have those criteria replaced, removed, and corrected, in a way so that the unemployed fishermen and plant workers in Newfoundland

and Labrador can qualify for that particular program. When that happens, Mr. Speaker, then the \$5 million will be spent, more will be spent, more will be required, and as the Provincial Government did every year for the last five years, this Government should be prepared to participate.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I want to know, and I asked the Minister yesterday, I want to know if the hon. gentleman for Trinity - Bay de Verde (Mr. Snow), I want to know if the gentleman for Harbour Grace (Mr. Crane), I want to know if the gentleman for Carbonear (Mr. Reid), and the Resource Short Plant Programs in their constituencies, Quinlan Brothers in Bay de Verde, Quinlan Brothers in Old Perligan, the Harbour Grace Fishing Company, Woodmans out in New Harbour, dozens and dozens, thirty fish plants altogether, Mr. Speaker, in this Province employing thousands of people are going to suffer under this so-called LIFO, this so-called last in/first out option that the Premier has now planted in the minds of the Government of Canada.

It is not going to have the effect of taking back northern cod that was originally processed in Nova Scotia to Newfoundland plants. That is not going to happen. There is not going to be one extra codfish come to Newfoundland for processing because of LIFO. What is going to happen is there will be fish taken from the Woodmans of the world, from the Quinlans of the world and from the Higdon's of the world to go to FPI and National Sea, some of which, Mr. Speaker, as in the case of National Sea, will end up in Lunenburg and other places in Nova Scotia.

This is where the Government is wrong in its approach on LIFO. And what they have done, Mr. Speaker, is a dastardly deed, because they have now planted that firmly in the mind of Ottawa. It was this Government that mentioned it to Ottawa. Ottawa will probably do it, because they never did support in principle and in reality those programs anyway. And the blame must lie where it belongs, because the idea came from this Government, this Minister, and this Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the first item the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned, the response program, we have had numerous discussions with the officials of that department. We have been told that the money that has been allocated, the \$5 million, at least in their view, will be adequate to look after the problem. We have been told, Mr. Speaker, that there is a lot of flexibility in the program.

MR. MATTHEWS:

(Inaudible).

MR. W. CARTER:

Oh, yes, a lot of flexibility, Mr. Speaker, so much so that fish plant workers, those who did not qualify by virtue of insufficient raw material to keep the plant operating, will qualify for benefits.

We are told that the \$5 million is a start and that it is there to respond to the program. And we have been told, not officially,

but we have reason to believe that if that \$5 million is not adequate, additional money will be forthcoming. We were told that the Province would not be needed to put funds into the program. If we want to yes we can, to top off certain programs. That is what we are doing now. We have a program now, as the hon. Member knows, a small grant program, so that if money is needed to top off a loan to build a slipway or something, that money will be available.

But certainly, Mr. Speaker, there is no request from Ottawa for additional funds from the Province. They are content that they can do the job. And in so doing, of course, they accept full responsibility for it.

MR. MATTHEWS:

What about (inaudible)?

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, if the Member for Grand Bank would remain silent. I have only five minutes. If he is trying to score points, he is not doing a very good job; the press is not even noticing him.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I do not believe there was an interruption by this side when the hon. the Leader of the Opposition was making his few remarks. I believe he was permitted to carry on, and I believe the Minister of Fisheries should be extended the same courtesy.

The Minister of Fisheries, please!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, that is the story. Now if the hon. gentlemen opposite want the Newfoundland Government, strapped for money as we are, to

take responsibility for that program and to start dishing out millions -

AN HON. MEMBER:

No, no.

MR. W. CARTER:

Oh, yes. That is what you are suggesting, without there being any need for it. But we are not going to do that, because maybe that is what has the Province in the mess it is in now.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the officials at -

Mr. Speaker, I think this chap must be watching too much Saturday TV wrestling. He is beginning to act like one of the Bushwhackers.

MR. MATTHEWS:

How do you know, Wally? You must watch it.

MR. W. CARTER:

I do not have to watch wrestling, I look at you every day.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, the money being allocated by the Federal Government is adequate to do the job. Why should the Province, then, throw money at a project for which the feds are quite willing and quite able to accept full responsibility? We have it from highly placed officials that for the year the Province did in fact put money into the project, it was nothing but chaos, the thing did not work. It created a lot of chaos. In fact, I believe about 10 per cent of the people who took advantage of the program were actual fishermen. Almost everybody but fishermen were employed on the jobs. So they are playing politics with it, as I would expect them to do, and I

suppose that is about all we can do about it. But I will tell you now the fishermen in the Province know a lot better.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the LIFO principle that the hon. Member mentioned, the Newfoundland Government is not locked into a LIFO principle, that is an option that we are looking at. We are basing our claim for additional fish for the Province, we are basing our claim for all the fish that is being caught on the basis of adjacency, economic efficiency, historic usage, and resource dependency. And if Ottawa were to accept those four principles, then, I think our case will rest there.

MR. RIDEOUT:

(Inaudible) same argument.

MR. W. CARTER:

Oh, yes, there is there is an argument to be used for the LIFO principle.

MR. SIMMS:

Because the Premier said it.

MR. W. CARTER:

Yes, there is. There is an argument to be used for it. The unfortunate part about it is that if we use it and succeed in retrieving 15,000 metric tons of fish from Nova Scotia, as we will, then the downside, of course, is that we are going to have to forfeit the resource-short plant, the mid-distance quota, and, of course, the other trawl quota that the 65 foot boats need. But we are certainly not locked in. They would try to make it appear we are, but I can tell you now that we are not; it is an option we have.

MR. RIDEOUT:

I know you are. I talked to Ottawa, too, and I know you are locked in.

MR. W. CARTER:

I do not care who you talked with. The fact of the matter is, we are not locked into it; it is an option; we are pressing on the other four principles, and I will repeat them for the benefit of the House:

The principle of adjacency: Surely Newfoundland does not have to work too hard to convince Canadians that we do have a right under that principle.

Economic efficiency: Does it make sense, Mr. Speaker, to catch fish in the 2J+3KL area and take it all away to Nova Scotia. That defies all laws of efficiency.

Historic usage: 200 years ago, 150 years ago, Newfoundlanders were landing 300,000 tons of that fish. So we have had an historic usage.

And, of course, resource dependency: Who can question our dependence on the resource?

So, by applying these four principles, we believe that the job can be done and done in Newfoundland to Newfoundland's advantage.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

This House is now adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, November 10, at 9:00 a.m.